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# FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS IN PHILOSOPHY AND SPORT

by

SIMON BRUCE EASSOM

(C)

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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Date 29th. APRIL, 1983

## DEDICATION

On behalf of my grandmother, Lillian Gladys Eassom,

this thesis is given in loving memory of

her husband and her daughter:

*Charles Cecil Eassom (1904- 1981)*

*Brenda Dorothy Atkins (1935- 1982)*

## ABSTRACT

An attempt has been made to delineate and delimit the fundamental problems of philosophy and sport. These are considered to be of mutual relevance to both the disciplines of philosophy and physical education. Each of the ten chapters deals with one of these problems in an isolated situation and can be read independently of the others. In general, the chapters fall into three main groups: those dealing with knowledge and perception (chapters 1, 2 and 3); those dealing with ontology (chapters 4, 5 and 6; and to a certain degree, chapter 3); and, those dealing with moral philosophy (chapters 7, 8 and 9). Chapters 1 and 10 also serve, in a very broad way, to respectively introduce and link some of the common themes throughout the thesis.

Although the topics and issues chosen to illustrate these problems are by no means exhaustive of the applicable considerations within the field, the problems themselves are believed to be of major concern for physical education. Thus, each chapter is given a title bearing on the underlying conceptual problem and not on its specific relation to sport. The discussions of important background material in each of the chapters have a direct bearing on many related topics not raised in the course of this thesis.

## PREFACE

There are several questions peculiar to the study of sport that demand a philosophical treatment if they are to be answered. These questions arise from the very nature of the activity itself: What is a game? What do we mean by fair play? Is play an escape or diversion from "reality"? Are play, games and sport meaningless, non-serious activities? Further questions are prompted by the attempts to answer these: If sports are non-serious activities, then why do people risk their lives in their pursuit of these activities? If fair play is a moral obligation, then why should we be moral?

This thesis does not attempt to offer answers to these specific questions, but rather chooses to look at the questions themselves and determine the underlying problem involved in each. Consequently, the problems considered here have many applications. For example, the discussion of subjectivity and objectivity in Chapter 1 could easily be illustrated by an analysis of the work-play dichotomy. Instead, "games" are considered: as objects that possess certain properties or characteristics, or as activities which can only be considered as "games" depending on the attitudes of the participants. Similarly, the discussion on metaethics focuses on an ethical problem in mountaineering concerning the use of artificial "aids", but just as easily applies to the use of drugs in sport. Thus, some conclusions to certain questions are reached, as a matter of course, but in general it is the underlying philosophical problem that is of most concern.

The approach undertaken here is not uncommon in traditional philosophy. It is exemplified by Bertrand Russell's *The Problems of Philosophy* and by Sir A. J. Ayer's *The Central Questions of Philosophy*. In keeping with this approach, those problems in philosophy of direct relevance to the study of sport have been highlighted: such as, the problems of knowledge and perception, existence and personal being, value and morality. These general problems are tackled by way of outlining them, giving background historical material, and discussing the theoretical and conceptual difficulties that are involved in each case. This has the advantage of illustrating what philosophy *is* at the same time as one is actually *doing* philosophy.

This approach has been missing from most of the texts in the philosophy of sport. The popular use of anthologies, such as Ousterhouldt's *The Philosophy of Sport: A Collection of Original Essays* and Gerber and Morgan's *Sport and the Body: A Philosophical Symposium*, does not provide adequate material of an informative nature concerning the background philosophical problems implicit in each of the issues. For example, Gerber and Morgan identify the main areas of concern for the philosophy of sport as: (1) the nature of sport, (2) sport and metaphysical speculations, (3) the body and being, (4) sport as a meaningful experience, (5) sport and value-orientated concerns, and (6) sport and aesthetics. This provides a wealth of resources within each of these categories, but no overall view of the fundamental issues involved. Rather, each article deals with a specific topic.

It is for this reason that there is not a chapter on "the definition of sport" or "drug use in sport". These independent issues are discussed by others (who are mentioned in the text). Thus, this thesis is not a set of essays dealing with ten topics. Instead, the focus of attention here is with how these topics can be tackled. What are the major philosophical considerations at issue when attempting to define games and sport? What does it mean to say that drugs ought not to be used? The problems, then, are prompted by, but are not dependent on, the many and varied questions raised by the study of sport. It is not considered problematic to discuss sport without first defining it, which is one of the preoccupations of sport philosophers. Any difficulty can be avoided by saying that, unless otherwise stated, games and sports are those activities that we normally call games and sports. Throughout this thesis, it will become clear that the definitions of games offered by Suits and Esposito (in the respective articles, "What Is A Game?" and "Play and Possibility") are the ones favoured. This is because they most adequately deal with the problem of definition, as outlined in Chapter 3. As stated, it is the problems themselves that are of interest here and not, specifically, their manifestations.

The areas discussed here are claimed to be the *fundamental* problems of philosophy and sport. By this, it is not meant that the questions raised are the only questions that can be asked. Rather, it is that all the questions of greatest importance to this area are grounded in one

of the "problems" outlined here. For instance, all questions concerning fair play, moral conduct in sport, and the inculcation of virtuous behaviour through physical education are dependent upon the considerations of ethical theory (Chapter 7), normative ethics (Chapter 8), and moral education (Chapter 9), respectively.

Thus, this thesis does not offer just one question and then set out to provide one answer. The chapters do not build incrementally towards one all-encompassing conclusion. In this respect, all of the chapters are quite separate and can be read quite independently. But, they do have an order and they are not totally unrelated. Chapter 1 introduces the conceptual framework within which most of the problems arise, and thus introduces some of the other chapters. Chapter 2 is an important discussion of reality and truth that is required if the ideas of Chapter 3 are to be accepted: that words "build" worlds and do not simply describe what is already there. The problem discussed in Chapter 3 (that of how definition of general terms is possible) is fundamental to any attempt to define play, games and sport. Such definitions are necessary for the accounts of moral language based on definitional criteria, as outlined in Chapter 7. And an understanding of the nature of the game is required if an agent-centred view of moral conduct is taken, as discussed in Chapter 8.

There are also many less obvious connections between the problems. One attempt to give meaning to life is based on the idea of "meaning" as a semantic relation. Thus, living is synonymous with game playing, in one particular view. Also, the trivialization of play, games and sport is based on the general view that play is different from "reality"; it is somehow non-serious or non-meaningful. These attitudes are discussed in relation to the problems of appearance and reality (Chapter 2) and the meaning of life (Chapter 4). Chapters 4 and 5 develop ideas concerning self-reflexive awareness which are taken up in Chapter 6 with the brief discussion of the player as a "person". This is an important consideration that is ignored by the "utilitarian" treatment of fair play, but is prerequisite for a "deontological" view of morally binding duty (Chapter 8). And this capacity is implicit in the distinction between reasoned and habitual behaviour as discussed in Chapter 9.

All in all, the problems considered in this thesis are in some way *fundamental* to most of the questions peculiar to the area known as the philosophy of sport. They are also *fundamental* problems in themselves, in that they are issues concerning life, death, reality, and how we ought to act. Thus, they deal with the major areas of concern for both philosophy and the study of sport. There are chapters on perception and knowledge (1, 2 and 3), chapters on existence (3, 4, 5 and 6), and chapters on value (7, 8, 9, and 10).

This thesis does have one aim, such that it is complete in itself with a beginning and an end. That is to delimit and illustrate a substantive area of interest that concerns both the study of philosophy and the study of sport. And there is indeed one question that affects all the problems discussed here: what defines the philosophy of sport? This thesis attempts to answer this by demonstrating what such a discipline might be. Such an undertaking requires the identification and discussion of the fundamental problems or questions that constitute this area of study. This is the philosophy of sport.

Simon B. Eassom

Edmonton, 1983.

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# I. SUBJECTIVITY AND OBJECTIVITY

In the following discussions we will look at some (seemingly) quite disparate problems. Each problem is meant to be, and can be, looked at quite separately.[1] However, there are some commonalities linking them into larger groups that deal with one broad area: chapters 4, 5 and 6 are concerned with matters of human existence such as life and its meaning, death and self-reflexive knowledge; chapters 7, 8, and 9 cover moral philosophy from theoretical, prescriptive and pedagogical concerns; and chapters 2 and 3 deal very loosely with ways of describing the world. Also, there are two or three themes that run through all of the chapters. One of these is the very general purpose of outlining some fundamental problems in philosophy and sport, with the aim of understanding and explaining situations that present conflicting views of the world. This is closely related to two more substantive themes. We will abstract these two from their particular instances and attempt to discuss them as 'problems' in their own right.

Several of the ideas developed throughout the chapters lead to a consideration of their cumulative effect on structuring and changing the world. Particularly, the ideas we develop concerning freedom, self-reflexive consciousness and moral autonomy lend themselves to visions of the future and possible sports worlds. We will leave this, though, until the concluding chapter.

A quite different theme (although not unrelated), is the one that we will begin with here. It is not an altogether obvious aspect of each of the chapters, but I believe it is fundamental to many of them. This will, hopefully, be made clearer in this opening discussion. I also feel that our subsequent discussions will be enhanced by the illumination of this 'problem' in an isolated situation. Unfortunately, it is of a very abstract nature. Nevertheless, I will briefly introduce most of the other chapters, as we proceed, whenever I might need to illustrate or

support my arguments. Thus, the first of our 'problems' will also serve as an introduction to the rest of our discussions.

**Subjective and Objective Accounts**

To show how difficulties arise with subjective and objective accounts of the world, let us begin by outlining an actual topic of considerable interest to philosophers of sport. Consider the attempts that have been made to define 'games'. In general, most definitions have tried to identify 'what it is to be a game'. This implies that games are objects consisting of a number of intrinsic elements and, furthermore, that they will always be games regardless of who plays them. For instance, tennis is a game that can be described quite independently of it being played.[2] What of those 'games' that are not games for some people, or those 'games' that can be both games and not-games for the same player at different times? Puzzles are good examples of these two situations.

Solitaire[3] is a game until the solution is found. It then ceases to be a game for that player, but may still be a game for someone else who does not know the solution. If the activity of completing the puzzle constitutes the game then, one would still be able to play 'solitaire' despite knowing how the puzzle works. This ignores an important aspect of game playing. Huizinga notes the necessary element of uncertainty,

> Tension means uncertainty, chanciness, a striving to decide the issue and so end it. The player wants something to 'go', to 'come off', he wants to 'succeed' by his own exertions.[4]

A game is more preferable if it can be played again and again whilst maintaining the possibility that success is uncertain. For this reason, puzzles are generally 'poor' games: they quickly lose their initial appeal if they do not remain a challenge. Some puzzles can be altered to keep the element of uncertainty by changing the determinant of success: that is, the end to be achieved and hence what it is to win or lose. Solitaire card games sometimes allow one to take 'lives' if

they cannot be completed. Once the game has been played using three 'lives', we try to finish with only two 'lives' or one 'life'. We can see that a game situation only occurs when the tension level is at a point between two thresholds of difficulty or uncertainty,

> . . . two tension thresholds characterize every [game] situation. A lower or subliminal threshold which indicates the point up to which there exists insufficient tension to make a gaming encounter possible. And an upper threshold which designates the point where tension becomes so great as to totally destroy the game form.[5]

A good example of this is the 'Rubik Cube'. For some people, completing the cube is so difficult that no game takes place. But, if the solution is known, there is insufficient tension to maintain the uncertainty of outcome. We can alter the difficulty of the task to keep the activity between the two levels of tension necessary for it to be a game. We might limit ourselves to completing just one side of the cube (if the normal goal is too difficult), or set a time limit such that we must complete the cube faster than before (if the normal goal is too easy).

The example of puzzles suggests that games must be played in order to be actualized. In other words, we cannot tell if the Rubik Cube is a game simply by considereing it in itself, although it obviously has the characteristics that enable it to be used to play a game. We can see from this argument that there would appear to be two cases of games:

> [1] A game as an object in itself, independent of it being played.
>
> [2] A game that is determined by the intention of the player(s).

This presents a problem if we are to come to any conclusions about games. let us consider the inquiry of the definist to be exemplified by the straightforward empirical question, "Is there something common to all activities that we call games?". Vernes indicates that this entails two different approaches,

> Philosophers who have studied games to determine their nature have evidently established two hypotheses: on the one hand, that all games can be studied collectively, as though the essence of the game were common to all, and on the other hand, that *the answer to the problem lies in the subject, or who plays, and not in the game itself considered as an object.*[6]

Contrary to first appearance, this does not mean that we cannot give an objective account in both cases. Even when a game can only be defined by a phenomenological account of what it is to *play* a game, we still believe that our definition can be quite objective and independent of any subjective differences. This will be made clearer if we begin by examining the first hyposthesis.

*The Object Itself*

We generally accept that most of our experiences consist of an interaction between a perceiving subject and a perceived object (the ego-pole and the object-pole, or the *pour soi* and the *en soi*).[7] But, despite the obvious relation between the observer and the observed, we assume that if the observer is removed then there is a way that things are in themselves. Stuart Hampshire states,

> That beings, who are capable of action and observation, are born into, and move among, a world of persisting objects is a logical necessity and not a contingent matter of fact.
> . . . whatever changes one tries to imagine in the nature of our perceptions, it would still be possible to single out persisting objects as objects of reference.[8]

As a result, we tend to look for the way that things are in themselves. For instance, the problem of universals deals with the way in which we group things together into classes, species etc. Do we do this because we notice a resemblance between several distinct individuals, or do these individuals share the same kinds of properties? The latter leads to the situation where we must admit to 'games', 'chairs', and 'whiteness' as being things themselves, such that we can define the essence of game playing by determining the nature of the universal 'games'. A resemblance theory does not support any natural recurrence that is due to properties or qualities. Instead, it only admits to the existence of particular things. If game-playing is definable it must be by virtue of our noticing a resemblance between all instances of activities that in common language are referred to as games. This entails that there is no natural way that things are grouped, independently of their being observed and based on their being the same in themselves.[9]

In determining the nature of the object (by what is known as a 'realist' or 'essentialist' account in the case of the problem of universals), we attempt to give more reliability to our

accounts. That is, regardless of the interaction between the subject and the object, we believe we can identify the nature of the object in isolation from its being perceived.[10]This will be a great advantage if it is possible. Surely, there can only be one way in which the object is in itself, but perhaps many ways in which it appears when perceived. The objective account chooses to seek the former.

This furnishes us with one approach to the study of axiology (values): do we say that something is 'good', 'beautiful', 'right' and so on because it possesses a property of 'goodness' or 'beauty'?[11]If so, then the value of an object is inherent and not dependent upon our perception of it. This would provide us with a very satisfactory and manageable account of moral discourse, whereby we can assess the truth of 'ought' statements based on our knowledge of what is 'good' or 'right'. As a result, statements such as, "Players ought to obey the rules" are not merely matters of convention or social norms but imperatives to act on the basis of knowing that 'obeying the rules' is inherently 'good'.

Such a possibility is clearly attractive. The less the value of an object depends upon the perceptions of the subject, the more consistently the same judgements would be arrived at from a variety of points of view. But even this requires that there is some consistency between the subjects perceiving the object. If there is a way things really are, this will not prevent diverse perceptions from differently constituted observers. My perception of the world and a hamster's perception of the world will be very different regardless of the fact that the world itself remains the same.

We can maintain the consistency of our interpretations if we interject between the observer and the world with a means of measurement that enables us to represent reality by way of relations, laws and causal connections. In this respect, Nagel adds,

> Objectivity requires not only a departure from one's individual viewpoint, but also, so far as possible, departure from a specifically human or even mammalian viewpoint. The idea is that if one can still maintain some view when one relies less and less on what is specific to one's position or form, it will be truer to reality.[12]

This presents problems for the theory of value that we considered above. Values are not tangible, measurable things. It would seem more likely that they do not exist independently of our actually choosing to value. This view would be the response of the doctrine of 'reism' which can be summarized:

> (i) An 'entity' is a 'thing' if and only if it is extended in time and space. (That is, if it is tangible)
>
> (ii) Only 'things' exist; there are no other kinds of entities other than material things. Abstract entities do not exist. (There are no properties, classes, attribute, numbers, etc.)
>
> (iii) Statements which imply the existence of abstract entities and also appear to be true, must be treated as metaphorical.
>
> (iv) Statements which implicitly suggest the existence of abstract entities are false.[13]

In so far as moral statements make claims as to what is 'good' or 'right' these cannot be assertions that can be objectively tested and proven true or false.

But this is an unfair account of ethical theories. We must be careful not to oversimplify the problem. An objective theory of ethics does not necessarily try to establish the ontological status of 'value'. When we take an objective standpoint, we attempt to view the world from a position that is detached from any place within it, with an awareness that is not subject to any particular point of view. We recognize that our own subjective view can be distorted by our own prejudices and presuppositions. The objective account tries to reduce these inconsistencies, or discount for them explicitly.

Thus, to say that puzzles are not 'good' games does not imply that they have properties a, b, c, but do not have the property 'goodness'. But, in contrast, this denial does not mean that 'good' is a purely subjective or relative notion. It might be that the terms 'good', 'better' and 'best' are simply terms of commendation, in which they are elective. Also, somebody needs to be doing the commending. However, the reasons why we commend, and hence whether

we can judge an action according to any standards as 'good' or 'bad', could be quite objective. That is, once we have established how value judgements are made, the nature of value becomes quite independent of us. This, I believe, is the approach taken by *descriptivism*. There are certain definitional criteria that must be satisfied for one to be playing a game. A 'better' game is one in which these criteria are satisfied more readily than if the goals and means have to be manipulated to maintain the game form. Another example would be the judgement of a 'good' backpack. Not anything would do to serve as a backpack. There are certain conditions for an objects approval necessitated by the nature of what it is to be a backpack. These criteria themselves are quite objective and independent of us once we decide that 'good' means meeting the criteria for 'goodness'.[14]

Clearly, there are degrees of objectivity. Or rather, there are not two viewpoints, subjective and objective, but a polarity. At one end is the point of view of the individual in the world and at the other is a picture of the world from nowhere within it. A view representative of the whole of a community is more objective than the subject-specific view, but less objective than that of the physical sciences.

*Degrees of Objectivity*

This leads us to the second hypotheses about games: "the answer lies in the subject, or who plays, and not in the game itself considered as an object". There is a sense in which some phenomenological facts are objective. It is often the case that we can know or say about another person what they must be experiencing. This is what we mean when we say, "Put yourself in their shoes". Games are objectively definable if we can establish what the experience must be like for an individual to be playing a game. Mead feels that games have commonalities regardless of the situations, purposes and participants in the activity,

> The game has a logic, so that such an organization of the self is rendered possible: there is a definite end to be obtained; the actions of the different individuals are all related to each other with reference to that end . . . so that they further the purpose of the game itself.[15]

Despite the fact that this notion of game playing does not refer to a set of physical characteristics, it can still be regarded impersonally and externally. It is not the case that subjective views cannot apply universally, which is after all one of the requirements of objectivity. Emotions, feelings, attitudes and other subjective experiences can be considered objectively provided that our accounts are generalizable and abstractable from specific situations. It could be that all subjective experiences can be accommodated under an objective interpretation.

If all this is the case, then we are justified in seeking the most objective account possible of everything. However, several 'problems' indicate that the objective conception of the world is sometimes incomplete or unacceptable. One of these problems arises from the idea that subjective experiences can be abstracted and given objective explanations. This is the case when we note the difference between an understanding of one's own death and that of others.[16]

In sports where we face the possibility of death, it is often the case that the participant will reflect on what it is to die. None of us has experienced death and can not know what it is like to be dead (if indeed it is like anything at all). Our experience is only of the death of others, and even this is not a genuine experience of death: we do not experience their death but only our awareness of their ceasing to be part of the world and of our lives. An objective account of death will tend to focus on the clinical aspects of defining the termination of life, or on the aspect of no-longer being an existing body within the world. So, the death of another is often thought of as a loss. But, if this is actually so, then it can only be a loss that is suffered by the survivors. The dead person is not there to experience the state of being dead, as if they are floating around in some sort of intangible, invisible limbo.

Consequently, we often think of our own death in the same way, by trying to imagine what it would be like after we are dead: the relatives and friends grieving, the funeral, the world continuing without us. Of course, this is perfectly imaginable if all we are doing is speculating on what things will be like for others when we are dead. However, my death is not an event that I can experience as a loss. Neither can I understand what it will be like for me to

die by trying to visualize the world without me in it. In death, my world does not change. It ceases.

So, death can be seen quite differently when viewed as the death of another. An objective account can depict this if it simply describes the disappearance of a person from the world. It cannot account for what it will be like for me to die, because to do this would be to describe an experience – and this is an experience that I can never have.

**Objectvity and Reality**

The strength and appeal of objectivity naturally leads us to associate it with *reality*. Either the objective account establishes the way things are in themselves or it ascribes some sort of predictability or generality to our subjective accounts. If our experience is incongruent with what should be the case in the situation then, it is an illusion. But, if the way things are, instead of the way they appear, has no meaning for the subjects within the world, then an objective account must miss something in spite of its use in establishing certain truths.

The so-called problem of the meaning of life illustrates this inconsistency.[17]It could be that play, games and sports are only meaningful activities from a purely subjective perspective. If they have any 'worth' then, this is intrinsic 'worth'. We can assess the worth of our pursuits from a position within life, that allows us to attribute 'meaning' to an act's intrinsic significance, and also to its significance in relation to other acts themselves intrinsically significant. In this sense, our lives can be judged to be meaningful from a subjective point of view. This is contrasted with a detached, impersonal view that tries to establish the meaning of life itself from an objective standpoint that is unconcerned with people's intrinsic significance. This viewpoint claims that life has no meaning or importance.

Several claims can be made by the objective view. It is a true account: life cannot be justified from any external viewpoint. This is a realization that anyone can have, and many people do have, if and when they adopt this viewpoint: that is, it will be consistent regardless of

the subject.[18]It is also an account of what life is in itself and is not dependent upon interpretation. Thus, the objective view presents itself as the *right* way to look at the meaning of life.

In reply, the internal view can admit to all this, but still sensibly ask whether such a view represents what life is *really* like: whether the objective view is relevant. Life is not lived from the outside, looking on from a detached position. If we take an internal view that life is meaningful then it does not matter that from an external view life does not matter. We would have to adopt this objective view itself for it to matter that from this view life does not really matter. Life cannot matter, period, from any view if this claim is to be of the way things *really* are. Obviously, the subjective view denies that this is the case.

The objectivist might then claim that we can seek an objective account of intrinsic worth. In the same way that we can assume two people perceiving the same object to be having an exactly similar experience, we can also give an objective account of the meaning of life from an internal view. In the case of games, we suggested that we can objectively assess the player's experience in a way that enables us to generalize that all people having this experience are playing a game. Yes, we can explain how the relationship between the subject and the object might be. But we cannot explain what it is like for the subject.[19]So, we can say that X has an objectively similar experience to Y, but X can never know what this is actually like for Y. For instance, if X finds running a worthwhile activity and Y finds golf a worthwhile activity, then X can empathize with Y by understanding that Y must feel towards golf a similar feeling that X feels towards running. But X cannot try to put himself or herself into Y's situation and say, "Now what would I feel towards golf if I were Y?" because X would never be Y but only X in Y's shoes.

The objective view can assess the phenomenological features of experience by giving these experiences a physical description: in other words, we can explain the physical effects of an object or activity on the mind of a human perceiver. We can *account* for a subjective view in this way but inevitably this abandons the singular point of view that makes it subjective in the

first place.[10]

*Subjectivity and Appearance*

We have found some quite considerable ground to challenge the unqualified association of objectivity with reality. Some views have gone to the opposite lengths of admitting the subjective view as basic and denying any irreducible objective reality. But this alternative is just as unacceptable as the first for the same reasons: the subjective view cannot totally account for the way things appear to be. The conclusion of this might be hard for the objectivist and the subjective idealist to accept, for it implies that there is no single world or way that things are in themselves. Nagel adds,

> The deep source of both idealism and its objectifying opposite is the same: a conviction that a single world cannot contain both irreducible points of view and irreducible objective reality – that one of them must be what there *really* is and the other somehow reducible to or dependent on it. This is a very powerful idea. To deny it is in a sense to deny that there is a single world.[11]

Earlier we considered that there is a polarity of viewpoints. Yet, we still might hanker after the objective extreme whilst admitting that objectivity has its limits. If we still wish to insist that everything real must be given an objective description, then Nagel suggests there are three courses of action open to us: reduction, elimination, and annexation.[12]

If we are unwilling to deny the reality of subjective accounts that cannot be given objectified versions, then we can invent an element of objective reality to incorporate these recalcitrant aspects: the mind, the soul, the ego etc.[13] Alternatively, we can eliminate them altogether by suggesting how these views have mistakenly arisen. The idea of a soul is a natural 'invention' to account for the dissatisfaction with the idea that persons are simply bodies. By far the most common of these three is reductionism, whereby we try to accommodate everything under an objective interpretation. We have looked at one way in which this cannot always work. In the next chapter we will relate this attempt specifically to sport and physical education and hopefully dispel it completely. An understanding of the world cannot always be gained by detaching ourselves from our particular viewpoint and subsuming whatever is apparent from

there under a more comprehensive view. Indeed, if we take this process too far, our objective account no longer depicts *reality* at all.

## II. FRAMES OF REFERENCE

As we have seen in our first discussion, it is often the case that subjectivity and objectivity are used interchangeably with the similar dualism of apparent and real. Such a comparison is often made pejoratively in order to stress that the 'truth' can only be gained by knowing the object or thing in-itself. Some of our considerations in the first chapter lead us to ask four specific questions about subjective and objective accounts of the world. We will concentrate on these in this discussion:

> [1] Is objectivity a detached, impartial, 'scientific' perspective?
>
> [2] Is subjectivity a perspective that is involved rather than detached, committed rather than impartial, and attached to the 'apparent' rather than the 'scientific'?

Equated with these are two further questions concerning the relationship between objectivity, the truth and reality:

> [3] Is reality what is given by true propositions?
>
> [4] Is appearance what seems to be true but is not *really* so, or is not objectively so?

Contrary to what would appear to be the case, we will deny that science tells us everything that is true about reality. Instead, I want to suggest that scientific truths simply present one of many 'versions' of the world. We will begin with a simple tale.

The Maharajah of India set off on a diplomatic visit to the Emperor of China. He

considered it courteous to send a gift to the Emperor, prior to his arrival, as an offering of friendship. Thus it was that an elephant arrived at the Emperor's palace with greetings from the Raj. The Emperor's initial excitement was dulled when he confronted the gift in one of his anterooms. He returned to his chambers and called for the aid of his three wise men, "The Maharajah of India has sent me a most perplexing gift. Such an object, I have never before seen. What I am to say when he asks me of this gift? Am I to appear so foolish as to not know what to make of it? A reward will be given to any of you who can tell me what it actually is." Now, the three wise men were very old and tired from many years of service to the Emperor. And through the vast amounts of reading and writing they had each endured they were all short-sighted to the extent of being nearly blind. Nevertheless, each was sure that he could make sense of this oddity and went, without the others knowing, to examine the gift. The following day, the Emperor summoned his advisors and asked them to report on their findings. The oldest and most revered of the wise men spoke first. He had been unable to see the elephant at all, for his eysight was so bad, and had relied solely on touch. But he had got so close to the elephant and was bent so low with his broken back that he had only felt the elephant's leg, "Sire, the Maharajah has sent you a most wonderful gift. It is a tree and its fruit is the knowledge of the world. No sturdier a tree have I ever seen with a trunk so solid and a bark so hard and tough." After this the second wise man stepped forward, "No Sire, that's not so." He had also got close enough to touch the elephant, but wasn't as bent and withered as the first wise man, and had felt the elephant's ear, "Sire, the Maharajah has sent you the finest tapestry to drape from your walls. The cloth is like leather but is stronger and yet more supple." At this, the third wise man could no longer contain himself, "No, no Sire. Both my learned friends are mistaken." He had only felt the tail of the elephant, "The gift is a magical gift, for it is a rope suspended from the clouds. And if you pull on this rope, Sire, the heavens will shower you with sweet incense."

**Reductionism**

The tale does not proceed to tell us of the Emperor's reaction to these reports but we can assume that he was dissatisfied with all of them. It is obvious that the gift is not a tree, tapestry or magic rope. The accounts of the wise men are *false* in that they do not correspond to what the object actually is. They each present a version of how the object *appears* but none of these versions describe its *reality*. Suppose a fourth wise man was to step forward and say, "Sire, my colleagues have failed to see the whole gift. Each, through his short-sightedness, has concentrated on but a single part and, truly, the parts that they studied do resemble the trunk of a tree, a tapestry, or a rope. However Sire, the gift is none of these: it is an elephant." We now have, what we can consider to be, a fourth version. If this satisfies us, is it that this version of how the object *appears to be* exactly corresponds with what the object *really is* apart from any versions? In other words, is it possible to measure the correctness of a version by comparing it to a version-less world: one that has not been described or depicted by a version already? For example, if we say that the elephant-version is true because the object is actually an elephant, the Emperor might then ask the further question, "What is an elephant?" To this we might receive several versions: one from the mystic (that the elephant is the embodied spirit of fortitude), one from the farmer (that the elephant is a machine that can do the work of fifty men) and one from the biologist (that the elephant is a particular species of animal). At this stage the Emperor might be satisfied with these versions, "Ah, an animal that can do the work of fifty men. I see." Let us suppose, in his pedantry, that he is not. We would then have to continue this reduction until we have found the *ultimate reality*. Yet, somehow, I do not think that the Emperor would be ecstatic over the *n*th. version: that he had been given a bundle of quantum particles.

*Sport as the 'Elephant': the whole and its parts*

Robert Nozick has aptly described ours as an "Age of Reductionism".[1]There is a tendency to break down the whole into its parts in order to better understand what something

really is. For example, one's personality is the sum total of the psychological structure of that individual. The combination of these parts distinguishes one person from another and also presents a more permanent and enduring aspect of one's behavioural pattern. Similarly, (aerobic) endurance can be broken down into the cardio-vascular, respiratory, muscular and biochemical components that make up the ability to sustain a workload beyond one's anaerobic capacity. Physical activities can also be analysed in terms of biomechanics. Consequently, the overall concern for performance is reduced into terms of physiological conditioning, biomechanical efficiency and psychological training. The latter has become increasingly important in recent times, owing to the relative optimization of the other aspects. Most sprinters are of the same somatotype, have trained to similar levels of strength and power, and have mastered the most biomechanically efficient styles and techniques. Occasionally, new physiological understanding alters our training regimens. This has been apparent in distance running with arguments over quantity and quality of training mileage, carbohydrate loading, and caffeine ingestion. Innovative styles and techniques alter our use of biomechanical principles and their successes lead to widespread adoption; as in the case of the 'O'Brien Shift' in shotputting and the 'Fosbury Flop' in high-jumping. But generally, these factors remain fairly constant. The most manipulative variable is often considered to be the athlete's personality. That is, two athletes can be equal according to any objective measure of strength, technique, build etc. yet, one may dominate over the other through control of this last variable. It is considered that many of the emotions are detrimental to performance. The athlete should be calm and collected to remain in control; "Play with your head and not your heart" is indicative of our rational heritage.

Nozick points out that such a tendency is often a "debunking" of value: the restatement of what is generally considered to be more valuable in terms of what is less valuable. Such statements are often of the form, "x is nothing but y". Thus, "a performance of a violin sonata is nothing but the scraping of horsehair on catgut", "love is nothing but a glandular secretion".[2] We can also say that that "the perfect golf shot is simply a result of the club face hitting the ball in the correct spot, at the optimum velocity, and at the right angle (or whatever

set of factors actually constitute the whole)". Such a need to break down the activity into its components is generally a search for causal explanation. That is, where there is a cause, there is a causal law. Ultimately, in this breakdown, these are the laws of physics, as all chemical laws can be expressed in terms of physical laws and all biological laws in terms of chemical laws, etc. In a much broader sense, reductionism can be associated with establishing necessary and sufficient conditions (in so far as these express causal relationships). Some of the earlier attempts at defining 'games' (mostly from anthropologists) reflect this conditional approach. For example, Roberts, Arth and Bush state that a game is,

> . . . a recreational activity characterized by: (1) organized play, (2) competition, (3) two or more sides, (4) criteria for determining the winner, and (5) agreed upon rules.[3]

Perhaps the most obvious example of the neo-Aristotelean desire to categorize everything in terms of genus and species is the attempt of John Loy and others to classify all sports as games and all games as play.[4] We are then left with play (our 'gift') for the wise psychoanalyst, the wise anthropologist, and the wise philosopher to offer versions of sexual repression, cultural recapitulation, and freedom from constraint.

We can offer reductionist explanations for most things. For example, religion: that it is merely a way of coping with the unknown, the fear of death, and the unexplainable. Such a "debunking" enables us to discredit religion as faith and not reason, belief and not knowledge. Freud has given us explanations that render our voluntary passions as merely instinctive patterns and conflicts established during our early childhood and separation from our mothers. Skinner has tried to show us that what we consider as 'free will' is a predetermined response under the control of a past history of positive reinforcement. Even our personal relationships and actions are attributed to "nothing but" products of socialization.

Is it that reductionism places more importance on 'matter' to the extent that it ultimately eliminates the 'form' (to use Aristotle's terminology)? Yet, what is something, bereft of this form? If the 100-metre sprint is "nothing but" a measure of the scientist's manipulation of

physiological, biomechanical, and psychological knowledge, then the actual event might never need to take place. We could feed the information into a computer and decide the result without recourse to the track. This has been done already in matching opponents of different eras that could never meet: Mohammed Ali fighting Rocky Marciano, or racing all the past winners of the Epsom Derby together. The suggestion that there is something else above these aspects, that there *is* a form or essence that reflects the 'whole' is considered to be metaphysical speculation, and one of the aims of reductionism has been to rid us of these 'ghostly' entities that we can not touch, see or measure. The inevitable conclusion of this is a monopolistic materialism or physicalism and the conviction that this is the nature of ***ultimate reality.***[5]

*Does matter really matter?*

Logical positivism (one of the major philosophical trends of this century) has been a classic debunker. Positivists generally hold that all statements other than those of empirical science, logic and mathematics are meaningless.'The seeds of this trend can be seen in writings as early as those of John Locke (with respect to religious truths), "how well-grounded and great so-ever the assurance of faith may be wherewith it is received; but faith it is still and not knowledge; persuasion and not certainty."[7]

The purpose of this reductionism is suggested to be a search for the 'truth'. Truth, however, is given the value of that which describes 'ultimate reality'. In the belief that this reality can only be depicted by one version, the positivists have generally combined with the (unity of science) view that physics is preeminent and all-inclusive. Every other version must eventually be reduced to it or rejected as false or meaningless.'Criticising this philosophy-to-end-it-all-philosophy view, Michael Polanyi states,

> . . . in the positivist sense truth becomes identified with scientific truth and the latter tends - by a positivist critique of science - to be defined as a mere ordering of experience. In this light, justice, morality, custom, and law appear as mere sets of conventions, charged with emotional approval, which are the proper study of sociology. Conscience is identified with the fear of breaking socially approved conventions and its investigation is assigned to psychology. Aesthetic values are related to an equilibrium of impulses in the nervous system of the beholder.'

But does this discovery of ultimate reality (if it exists) give us the truth? And, whether it does or not, is it any more meaningful than our naive realistic view?

To offer a reductionist explanation of something requires that we do more than refer to other things with the same properties. To say, "Basketball is a game" demands more than saying, "Basketball resembles, or is similar to, all these other things that we call games." We may learn originally to conceptualize ostensively but this does not offer explanations. It is the properties themselves that need to be explained.[10]For example, to say that one has a "Lee Trevino" swing may well be figuratively true, but all we are saying is that the characteristics of this swing are the same as those of Lee Trevino's. If we then describe the characteristics that literally describe Trevino's swing, we are also saying that these are indicative of the other. But is it necessarily a more genuine question to ask whether someone has an 'out to in' rather than a 'Trevino swing' simply because one is literal and reductive rather than figurative and non-reductive? At what level do these reductions stop? What happens when we reduce to the smallest particles? To what do we reduce these in order to explain themselves, and so on *ad infinitum?*

It was the pre-Socratics that first ventured into metaphysical questions on the nature of the world. Thales the Milesian, seeking to find some order in the vast confusion of superstitions and beliefs, claimed that the world is water: he saw the continual cycles of condensation and evaporation, of earth turning to water and water drying to earth. His contemporary, Anaximander, questioned why, with all other elements, water should be considered the most important; in fact, why any should be considered above the others. Such impositions on reality would be arbitrary. Consequently, he concluded that there must be a substance beyond these from which they all originate. This he named the "Infinite" or "Boundless". Empedocles agreed that we can not choose one element over another and so took all four. All other things became a chaotic mixture and separation of these eternally existing "roots". Perhaps, the most powerful and subtle thinker of them all was Democritus. With Leucippus, he inflicted the most haunting theory upon us: if everything is reduced far enough there will be

sameness (all particles will be alike). Thus they founded atomism.[11]

The important thing about all these reductions is that they try to explain, what Heidegger terms, the fundamental question of metaphysics, "Why is there something rather than nothing?"[12]They try to organize what would be an otherwise orderless world. This is as much an artificial imposition when made in science and philosophy as it is in any other sphere. This observation lead, philosopher of science, Norwood Hanson to claim that the so-called 'facts' are as theory-laden as it is hoped that our theories are fact-laden.[13]All these different classical systems choose to break down the 'whole' in conflicting ways. As Nelson Goodman points out, "That there are alternative systems discredits none of them; for there is no alternative but blankness to alternative systems, to organization of one kind or another. . . .complete elimination of the so-called artificial would leave us empty-minded and empty-handed."[14]We would do better, in Goodman's view, to focus on the different versions of the world rather than the world-in-itself. Woody Allen sums this up well when he says,

> Can we actually 'know' the universe? My God, it's hard enough finding your way around in Chinatown. The point, however, is: Is there anything out there? And why? And must they be so noisy? Finally, there can be no doubt that the one characteristic of 'reality' is that it lacks essence. That is not to say that it has no essence, but merely lacks it. (The reality I speak of here is the same one Hobbes described, but a little smaller.)[15]

To avoid Allen's wit let us leave the problem of ultimate reality and concentrate on how we choose to describe it.

**Versions and Visions**

So far, what we have done is suggest that there are many versions of the world, in the sense that our ways of describing, depicting and classifying the world vary. The main reason for why we do this is to make sense out of meaninglessness and order out of chaos. However, the construction of a 'version' is no more the random piecing together of images than a game of chess is the random movement of parts on a board. Our versions are right versions by virtue of

relating or corresponding to the 'truth'. Here we have a problem. By denying that there can be a version-less world our notion of 'truth' cannot be defined or tested by agreement with the supposed actual-world. Is it not that a right version is different from a wrong version by being applicable to this actual-world? Or can we consider that the actual-world is that which is depicted by a right version? As Goodman points out, it is impossible to attempt to test our versions against this actual-world that has not been described or perceived,'

> While we may speak of determining what versions are right as 'learning about the world', 'the world' supposedly being that which all right verions describe, all we learn about the world is contained in right versions of it; and while the underlying world, bereft of these, need not be denied to those who love it, it is perhaps on the whole a world well lost.[16]

It was this problem that led Norwood Hanson to claim that what we consider as 'facts' are still theory-laden ones. They are the facts that we choose to concentrate on to the exclusion of others. It was a 'fact' that the elephants leg felt like the trunk of a tree but the Emperor chose to ignore this 'fact' in preference for another. The monopolistic materialist's argument that we can reduce all things to 'bare facts' to determine what something is does quite the opposite; the biologist, for example, in reducing the whole animal to cells and then to protein molecules eventually destroys any differences in the organisms and reduces everything to sameness. Hence, the Emperor's dissatisfacton with the *n*th. version. Yet, this version is no more or less true than any other 'right' version. It does not make sense to say that the figurative description of my golf swing as a 'Lee Trevino' is any less truthful than the literal description of it in terms of bio-mechanics. We cannot claim that the world versions of Galileo and Newton are any more truthful than those of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. All "worldmakers" can be compared to someone selling cheese. The artist might give us a slice of cheese (life?) and say, "Here, taste this. This is what the rest of the cheese is like" and the scientist shows us what the cheese is made of saying, "You see now why the cheese tastes like it does?" Both accounts suggest that the sample is representive of the rest of the cheese, but both are very different versions.

*What is a Version?*

It is difficult to escape from the view that all versions are describing the same thing, or what we have called the 'actual-world'. 'Version' implies an interpretation or depiction. We can easily identify different ways of interpreting the world, yet still believe that in the end there is one reality. What we call 'snow' the Inuit have many different names for and each name depicts a very different material. Still, we tend to maintain that it is simply a different way of classifying and that in *reality* we can identify what all these forms of snow have in common by reducing them to their basic elements. These are the facts. They are found and not made. They constitute the actual-world and not the apparent-world. Knowledge consists in uncovering and believing these facts. The materialist's motto could be, "there is no difference without a physical difference." This physical difference is in the object itself and not in our interpretation of it.

This view becomes less acceptable when we find two or more conflicting statements that each tell the 'truth' about what is supposedly the same thing. In our story of the elephant the truths were metaphorical, but we could have the same situation with literal truths. Consider, what we will call, the *Case of the Perpetually Retaken Penalty Kick*. It is a rule in soccer that, when facing a penalty kick, the goalkeeper must not move from the goal line until the ball has been kicked. If he or she does, and the penalty is missed or saved, it must be retaken (as the goalkeeper is deemed to have gained an unfair advantage). The referee in this instance is particularly sympathetic to the penalty taker. There is an unwritten rule amongst local referees that if a goal would probably have been scored had the offence not occured then it is only fair to do everything possible to allow the disadvantaged team to score from the penalty. Invoking the rule that the goalkeeper cannot move before the ball is kicked, should a goal not be scored, the referee orders the penalty to be retaken. Upon any complaints that the goalkeeper did not move the referee simply explains how we are all 'moving' on a vast playing field that is whirling through space at approximately 66,700 miles per hour.

Of course, the truth of the referee's version cannot be denied. Even though it is a

trivial or irrelevant truth it is nevertheless a truth and such unintelligible truths are many and frequent. If two people were to stand naked in the street and one was to say, "It's cold" and the other, "No, it's quite hot really" we would not deny the truth of each statement and would certainly not claim that one was more or less right than the other. We could easily become convinced with such contradictions that Pythagoras was correct and that the truth is relative. If, however, we put both people in a hot desert and they still made the same statements we might begin to consider that the first person is somewhat abnormal. Even so, if we could be convinced that this person does genuinely feel cold then we might be forced to admit that 'truth' is not sufficient in all our explanations. Admittedly, we could prefix each statement with a qualification. In the *Case of the Perpetually Retaken Penalty Kick*, the referee's statement becomes, "Under a more cosmic frame of reference the goalkeeper was moving" and the goalkeeper's protest becomes, "Under a very local frame of reference I didn't move at all". With such conflicting versions we can choose one of three courses of action: (1) reject one as false, (2) accept both and admit to the relativity of truth, or (3) admit both as 'true' but use a different criteria for judging which is more acceptable. Hopefully, we can see that (1) would be a mistake. (2) is not a view that we will choose to take, despite the adherence to relativism by some, particularly in sociology, anthropology and ethical philosophy. Position (3) seems to be more plausible. Let the different 'true' descriptions that conflict with each other be called 'versions'. If these frames of reference allow us to build larger products that offer true, right, comprehensive but nevertheless different versions of what is assumed to be the one and only world (yet if we fail to give a depiction of this world apart from all frames of reference) then, can we say in any non-trivial sense that there are *many* worlds? Moreover, can we reverse our original judgement, that versions are right if they depict the world, to the more paradoxical view of Goodman, that "the multiple worlds (we) countenance are just the actual worlds made by and answering to true or right versions"?[17]

*Science is a Version*

Can science be a version in this sense? Science is often claimed to be beyond

interpretation. It is, in Walter Wallace's words, "*the* way of generating and testing the truth of statements about events in the world of human experience".[18]The value of science is seen to lie in its objectivity, or rather its lack of reliance on the producer of the knowledge. This is in contrast to more subjective conceptions of truth such as; the "authoritarian" mode (reliance on those more qualified), the "mystical" mode (supernatural and inspirational explanations), and the "logico-rational" mode (the production of a logical and coherent model of truth).[19]By deliberately and systematically annihilating the individual scientist's standpoint, the value of science lies in the confidence with which we can accept the truth it purports to establish. The superiority of the scientific mode, according to Wallace, is found in its objectivity, refutability[20], testability and replicability. This enables us,

> . . . to say of every statement of scientific information that it represents an *unbiased* image of the world - not a given scientist's *personal* image of the world, and ultimately not even a *human* image of the world, but a *universal* image representing the way the world "really" is, without regard to any distinguishing characteristic of the observer.[21]

The 'truth' may undoubtedly be established by any of the other three modes of generating knowledge. However, we have suggested that the truth cannot be defined or tested by agreement with a world undepicted. Science is a builder of versions in much the same way that art is, albeit that the end product of science is literal rather than figurative. The 'tools' of scientific measurement: periods of time, measures of volume, increments of speed, are all built into the world. They are not *discovered* there. Up to now, we have associated science with literal depiction. Even this is not strictly accurate. Our grasp of macro concepts like black holes and the bending of light in space, and of micro concepts such as elemental structure, require metaphorical analog instruments to bring these within our frames of reference. Thus, the scientist builds models or uses analogies to explain much more abstract concepts. Scientists are also biased constructionists. Like the jigsaw-puzzle maker, they look for the details that they believe will help in fitting disparate parts of the puzzle together. Occasionally, by accident they stumble across a piece that imposes itself upon them. Consequently, they find what they are

prepared to find and are often oblivious to what is considered unimportant or a hindrance. Goodman claims that,

> The scientist is no less drastic, rejecting or purifying most of the entities and events of the world of ordinary things while generating quantities of filling for curves suggested by sparse data, and erecting elaborate structures on the basis of meagre observations. Thus does he strive to build a world conforming to his chosen concepts and obeying his universal laws.[22]

The scientist as a builder of versions, or a "worldmaker", is not the servant of 'truth'. 'Truth" is simply one of the architect's tools. It is a multifaceted tool, though, for the scientist uses it to build simplicity, scope, high levels of abstraction, universality and flexibility.

**The Dogma of Objectification**

The acceptance of other versions is not a rejection of objectivity, reproducibility and parsimony. It is necessarily an acceptance that classical science is not the *only* way of depicting the world. How can Tolstoy's or Marcel Proust's world views be reduced to physics or behaviourist psychology? We must accept that the presumption of science is the value of its methods and aims.

A growing body of trenchant criticism has evolved in feminist scholarship, attacking the supposed value neutrality of science and recognizing its "ideology of gender".[23]Science favours rationality rather than emotionality and objectivity in preference to subjectivity. Fee states,

> We find that the attributes of science are the attributes of males; the objectivity said to be characteristic of the production of scientific knowledge is specifically identified as a male way of relating to the world. Science is cold, hard, impersonal, "objective"; women, by contrast, are warm, soft, emotional, "subjective". Even the hierarchy of the sciences is a hierarchy of masculinity: As the language suggests, the "hard" sciences at the top of the hierarchy are seen as more male than the "soft" sciences at the bottom.[24]

The demand for objective knowledge independent of the means of producing this knowledge is

prevalent in sport. Our 'scientific' temperament leaves us uneasy with concepts of excellence and quality. We feel the need to determine exactly what is meant by good performance. It is not enough to say that Fernando Valenzuala, of the Los Angeles Dodgers, is a 'good' pitcher. 'Good', here, needs to be quantified in terms of the number of curve balls, knuckle balls etc. he has pitched to left handers and right handers, pinch hitters, batters on three balls, with bases loaded. Football players are quantified according to yardage, touch downs, interceptions. Ice Hockey players are credited with assists as well as goals. It is impossible to watch the World Series or the Super Bowl without being deluged by statistics that quantify each players performance; all as a result of our 'scientific' desire for objectivity and predictability. Paul Willis labels this the "pragmatic-linear-determinist" approach. It, ". . . involves the identification and measurement of a number of variables in a particular system and the empirical investigation of how they are causally related."[25]

The process of identification and measurement of variables subordinates the means of production to the end product. This is particularly the case in, what might be called, the purposive sports. These are those sports which have aims or ends which can be specified independently of their manner of achievement.[26]The end becomes the most important factor in judging quality or excellence. Thus, in the long-jump, the purpose is to jump as far as possible using only the means allowed. The athlete is better or worse than others according to his or her ability to reproduce the objective variables through which one achieves this end. The 'best' long-jumper (Olympic Gold Medalist or World Record Holder) is the performer who is most capable of nearing the absolute ideal. This has been described by Geoff Dyson,

> Theoretically a jumper who could raise his Centre of Gravity 3ft (0.91m) at take-off (about the maximum achieved, so far, in high jumping) and combine this with the horizontal speed of 36ft (10.97m) per second (near the top recorded sprinting speed) could long-jump 37.5ft (11.43m) - i.e. about 8.5ft (2.60m) farther than the existing men's world record. (The calculation is based on the assumption (1) that the jumper's Centre of Gravity would be 1.5ft (43cm) lower at the instant of landing than at take-off (so that it moves 34.67ft (10.53m) horizontally in flight), and (2) that he jumps 3ft (92cm) further because of his Centre of Gravity's distance in front of the board at take-off and its position behind the heels on landing.)[27]

Presumably, then, women are not as 'good' long-jumpers as men owing to their lesser sprint speed and high jumping capability (due in part to the fact that they can only produce 90% of the male strength output) and their lower Centre of Gravity. This is, of course, if long-jumping is considered in terms of the distance jumped (that is, an objectification of what it is to long-jump). But, as Willis points out, "Games and sports played by women could be judged purely for themselves, without reference, all the time, to what are taken as the absolute values, the only yardstick of achievement: *male* achievement."[21]

*Is Objectification a Problem?*

To say that the purpose of long-jumping is to achieve the distance jumped is like saying that the purpose of climbing a mountain is to stand on its summit. Obviously, we would not consider the achievement of a 20 foot tall man who can leap 50 feet as comparable with our normal standards. What is significant about the long-jump is that it represents the distance that can be jumped given certain limitations of height, strength, biomechanical efficiency, etc. The only way in which women's achievements could be considered 'inferior' to men's is if we constantly refer to some objective measure of how far could be jumped without reference to who or what is doing the jumping. Unfortunately, such an approach is implicit in the Olympic ideal of *citius, altius, fortius* (swifter, higher, stronger). But, by this virtue, the heavyweight wrestling or boxing champion would be *the* wrestling or boxing champion and, yet, we recognize that fly and welterweights might be equally as 'good' wrestlers or boxers.

Even in sports where the extraneous elements are identified and accounted for by division into weight and size classes (and other ways of maintaining 'equality'), the objectification of performance measures can still present anomolies. We often witness the 'better' player or team losing. Supposedly, the result is an indicator of which side is 'best' at the activity. A score of 1-0 indicates that the victor is slightly more superior than the loser; 4-0 suggests a greater margin of differentiation. The system generally works, but what do we make of statements such as, "Arsenal and Leeds in the early seventies were both very succesful soccer teams, yet neither played 'good' soccer"? The statement would seem to be self-contradictory if succesful soccer

signifies 'good' soccer. If 'good' soccer does not necessarily produce goals then why is it *good* soccer? It *is* self-contradictory if the method of measuring 'good' soccer is objectified as 'scoring most goals' and this then takes on an independent status whereby 'goals scored' becomes the yardstick with which 'good' soccer is judged. By the same virtue, the knock-out punch, as an indicator of a boxer's ability to get through an opponent's defences and strike an effective blow, has become an end in itself. Originally, it was a 'means' of measuring the better boxer, now the 'better' boxer is the one who knocks-out an opponent. Clearly, if the punch was a fluke, the 'better' boxer might not be the winner.

There are other instances when objectification alters, or destroys, our normal conception of an activity. A natural result of objectification is institutionalization. Particularly, when consistency of measurement is required for means of comparison, then games and sports take on definite 'descriptions'. That is, they become defined in terms of the components of which they are constituted. We can talk about 'tennis' in terms of the court, the net, the points, games and sets. Similarly, 'soccer' is constituted of the ball, two teams of 11 players, the pitch and the goals. In this fashion, it makes sense to say to a child, "Go and get a game out of the toy cupboard". The game (let us consider Monopoly) is made up of the components that determine it to be Monopoly and no other game. However, a game of squash does not merely consist of a court, a ball, two raquets and two players. It has to be *played*. Our previous statement implies either that Monopoly *is* a box full of houses, hotels, streets, a car, an iron, a top hat, a shoe (and so on) or that there are people in the cupboard playing games. The argument may seem absurd at first. Let us consider some more 'realistic' examples. Are four children kicking a ball between two sets of markers playing soccer? Is a five-hour first-timer in a marathon playing the game of the 'New York Marathon'? Are two people co-operatively batting a shuttlecock to-and-fro over a net, with badminton racquets, on a badminton court, playing badminton? They are not if; soccer is two sides of 11 . . . , marathon running is trying to run 26.2 miles faster than the others, and badminton is the first side to reach 15 or be two clear points ahead if 14-14 . . . One way of avoiding this is to say that they *are* playing soccer, marathoning, badminton, but they are *not*

playing *a game of* soccer, marathoning, badminton. If this is the case, then, the essence of soccer is independent of, but contained in, a game of soccer. So, we return to the problem above – what is the essence of "soc-A" (playing soccer) such that winning "soc-B" (a game of soccer) measures how well one does "soc-A"? The question cannot be denied, because to claim that "soc-B" does not entail "soc-A" is to imply that one can have reached a result in "soc-B" without having played "soc-B".

*Objectification and Domination*

Objectification is an instrumental mode of symbolization. That is, it dichotomizes the subject and the object whereby the object (nature, the external world) exists for the sake of the human subject as a means for realizing exclusively human purposes. Marx, for example, endorses this instrument mode, "Nature becomes . . . simply an object for mankind, purely a matter of utility."[29]For Marx, labour (or production) is the essence of humanity: "the first premise of all human existence".[30]Objectification is a means of recognition whereby human identity is self-constituted, and labour is *the* irreducible form of objectification. Marx sees labour as an expression of life itself: "As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with *what* they produce and with *how* they produce."[31]Engels, even more than Marx, argues that objectification is primordial. The evolutionary leap from ape to human was largely due to our capacity to transform nature in accordance with our designs and projects. Consequently, the human species is destined to struggle for recognition in and through the transformation of nature. But, human beings are 'free' in the sense that we are not constrained by the natural environment. Objectification implies the capacity to dominate by producing the projects of our imagination. According to Marx, "what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is . . . that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality."[32]

How does the notion of labour as objectification relate to our earlier discussion of objectification in sport? The process of objectification is a means whereby an end result is produced that symbolizes the performance of the athlete or team. The distance thrown or

jumped is the product or symbol of the throwing and jumping. The study of sport is full of exclamations representing a feeling of overcoming opposition and appropriating what one has overcome. Thus, the flag on Everest represents what has been produced, long after its production. Sartre calls this an act of "appropriation",

> To this act of appropriation through sport, there must be added another – a difficulty overcome. It is more generally understood, and we shall scarcely insist on it here. Before descending this snowy slope, I must climb up it. And this ascent has offered to me another aspect of the snow – resistance. I have realized this resistance through my fatigue, and I have been able to measure at each instant the progress of my victory. Here the snow is identical with *the Other*, and the common expressions "to overcome", "to conquer", "to master", etc. indicate sufficiently that it is a matter of establishing between me and the snow the relation of master to slave. This aspect of appropriation which we find in the ascent, exists also in swimming, in an obstacle course, etc. The peak on which a flag is planted is a peak which has been *appropriated*. Thus a principal aspect of sport – and in particular of open air sports – is the conquest of these enormous masses of water, of earth, and of air, which seem *a priori* indomitable and unutilizable; and in each case it is a question of possessing not the element for itself, but the type of existence in-itself which is expressed by means of this element; it is the homogeneity of substance which we wish to possess in the form of snow; it is the impenetrability of the in-itself and its non-temporal permanence which we wish to appropriate in the form of the earth or of the rock, etc. Art, science, play are activities of appropriation, either wholly or in part, and what they want to appropriate beyond the concrete object of their quest is being itself, the absolute being of the in-itself.[33]

As a result, events or performances become disembodied from the performers. However, they remain as symbols associated with that performer. Thus, the 'four-minute-mile' cannot be disassociated from Roger Bannister, but it is objectified as an external standard or symbol of achievement.

Isaac Balbus associates this instrumental mode of symbolization with repressive domination (a structure that Marx claims objectification can overcome),

> More specifically: production (now understood as technological domination), sexual domination, and political domination are elements of a whole or a totality characterized by an exclusively instrumental mode of symbolizing the relationship between the self and the "natural", sexual, and political others with whom/which it relates – a mode, in short, in which self and other are related as subject to an object.[34]

Balbus' criticism of Marx is relevant here because it shows how Marx construed objectification as an unalienated and adequate mode of recognition. This is due to his denial of Hegel's thesis that objectification is an advance over domination. Hegel makes clear in his *Phenomenology of Mind* that the objectifying consciousness remains divided against the world on which it works, rather than at one with it.[35] Hegel develops his theory of recognition through labour in his famous analysis of the mastery-slavery relationship in the chapter on 'Lordship and Bondage'. In brief, the master-slave relationship exemplifies the domination of one party to a human relationship over the other. Balbus explains,

> In such a relationship, the master attempts to annul the otherness of the slave by treating him or her as an object of control; the resistance of the other is overcome insofar as the other is treated as a thing to be possessed and thus as a mere extension of the self.[36]

The attempt to achieve recognition through domination is unsuccessful because the slave becomes a 'thing' and recognition demands that we be recognized by another human being. Domination is inherently inadequate in the struggle for recognition. However, the slave is open to a mode of recognition through the act of labour. By objectifying nature, the slave is able to gain a sense of mastery or power over the otherness of the external world by making it an extension of his or her projections. The slave becomes aware of, "having and being a *mind of his own*" notwithstanding the attempts of the master to reduce him or her to an extension of themself. Balbus adds that,

> . . . for Hegel labour is only one mode of the struggle for recognition; it by no means exhausts the forms through which human beings strive to achieve integration with nature and among themselves . . . Hegel understands it to emerge out of, and in reaction to, a prior form of the struggle for recognition, the master-slave relationship. The effort to secure recognition through the production of objects is a response to an "improper" or repressive struggle for recognition between two subjects: for Hegel, domination precedes objectification.[37]

**Towards a Pluralistic Sportsworld**

We originally began this chapter discussing 'versions' of the world and focused on reductionist or 'scientific' versions in particular. Our discussion has been prompted throughout by the underlying problem of 'appearance and reality'. We could have looked at Protagoras of Abdera's view that, "man is the measure of all things"; at Descartes' dualism of mind and body; and Kant's dualism of phenomena and noumenon (appearance and the 'thing-in-itself'). However, we have focused primarily on one attempt at understanding reality. That is the attempt to discern *objectively* what the world is like independent of our perceptions. We have taken this further and considered how this frame of mind affects relations and our conception of the world. Several labels have been given to this attempt, but primarily the term 'materialism' best serves our purposes. Although we have critiqued 'monopolistic materialism' as an exhaustive, exclusive version of the world we have not disclaimed its truth, only argued that it is a version and there are others equally as acceptable. The chapter has focused on this version because it is the one most persuasive and predominant. It, therefore, warrants our biased treatment of it to dispel its monopoly. It is significant that the versions themselves have several paradigms within them that are recognized as such and constantly being changed or overthrown. Thus, the definition of the elephant as a particular species of animal stems from the prominent paradigm of biological science (post-Darwin). In sociological terms we might rename the term 'paradigm' as 'ideology' in the sense that our 'world-view' tends to determine which paradigm or frame of reference we choose.

Our discussion concerning perception and knowledge has been an *epistemological* treatment of metaphysics. The *ontological* argument on these matters is concerned with 'monist' and 'pluralist' views of reality. These can best be explained by considering two fundamental 'quantitative' questions: (1) How many things are there? (2) How many kinds of things are there? At first, the question may not seem worth asking. There appear to be lots of things and lots of kinds of things. This view, for the moment, we will call *pluralism*. It does not seem to make sense to say that there is only one thing, or kind of thing. However, the materialist says

that there is only one kind of thing: matter. Conversely, the idealist says that the one kind of thing is mind or ideas. A contradiction appears to be involved when we say that there are *many* things but that they are all of one *kind*. This can be clarified by differentiating between the two questions. Those who answer 'one' to (1) advocate *substantial monism*. The apparent plurality of substances is in fact different states of a single substance, which could be God-or-Nature (Spinoza), the Absolute (Bradley), Mind (Berkeley), or Quality (Lao Tzu). Those who answer 'one' to (2) advocate *attributive monism*. This is the view that the many substances we perceive are all of the same kind. Similarly, those who answer 'many' to (1) and (2) are *substantival* and *attributive pluralists* respectively. Thus, it is possible to be a substantival pluralist but an attributive monist.

The monist-pluralist dilemna tends to dissolve under analysis. The question of whether we see the universe as a single 'block' which is unchangeable and indivisible (as suggested by laws governing the conservation of energy and matter) or made up of many different things is a matter of perspective. Choosing between monism and pluralism is choosing a frame of reference. What we have looked at, and want to describe here, is a plurality of frames of reference. We have argued that this plurality is missing in our normal conception of the world. In fact, we could say that the statistician is a monist (the 'norm' is reality) and we are all statisticians. Thus, play is 'unreal', hallucinatory drugs are an escape from 'reality', the mystical is beyond the 'real' world. However, we are heading towards the realization of a leisure society and there are groups of people who are permanently under the influence of drugs (not to mention Koala bears who are permanently "stoned" from ingesting the eucalyptus in gum leaves all day). What is 'reality' in these instances?

*Different Realities*

Nozick suggests a plurality of philosophical views in order to avoid parochialism,

> The treatment for philosophical parochialism, as for parochialism of other sorts, is to come to know alternatives. We can keep track of the different philosophical views that have been put forth and elaborated; we can pay attention to foreign traditions and their diverse viewpoints, to the special

> slant of these traditions on our questions, both the different ways they pose their most nearly equivalent questions, and the different answers they offer. There even may be ways of catapulting oneself, at least temporarily, into different philosophical perspectives. Various drugs seem to have given the experience of how the world looks and feels from one or another of the diverse Eastern perspectives to Westerners, including some previously unfamiliar with the conceptual framework into which they were catapulted."

The use of hallucinogenic drugs is by no means vast. Yet, it has been claimed that the "high" from sport is very similar to the "high" from sources such as heroine; and many of us have access to and experience these "highs". This is discussed in detail in Gary Egger's recently published *The Sport Drug*,

> Sport, it seems, can provide psychological moments that are not very different from the experience of certain drugs. There may even be an underlying biochemical basis for this in the form of mediation by the body's endogenous opiates. Ironically, both endeavours, although apparently quite distinct, may be linked by an area of behaviour which has been much studied, but little understood – play."

It is interesting to note a string of connections between several ideas that we have looked at. Eastern philosophies and religions, Zen Buddhism in particular, have stressed a 'oneness' or 'suchness' with the external world. Nozick speculates that drug experiences might give us insights into these different philosophies and Egger gives considerable evidence for comparing sport-induced "highs" with drug-induced "highs". It is significant that Hegel, whom we have briefly discussed concerning objectification as a result of domination, has been considered to be a bridge between Western and Oriental philosophy with his monism of Absolute Mind. Absolute Mind, for Hegel, is a transcendence of subjectivity and objectivity.

The result of objectification in sport, as we saw, is the tendency to treat the end result as more significant than the means of producing it. This is particularly so in competitive or "purposive" sports. The alternatives to these can be called "aesthetic" sports. These are sports in which the purpose cannot be considered apart from the manner of achieving it. As Best says, "There is an intrinsic end, one which cannot be identified independently of the means."[49]However, many sports do not fit easily into this dichotomy of "purposive" and

"aesthetic". For example, football and baseball might seem to be clear cases of the former and figure skating and gymnastics of the latter, but, what about our example of those people concerned with playing rather than playing a game. And what of sports such as climbing where there is a purpose, but this is meaningless other than in terms of the means by which it is achieved? Even more incongruous are examples of many people involved in an activity but playing different 'games'. We cannot seriously consider the tail-enders in a marathon as playing the same 'game' as the leaders, despite their participation in the same event. The 'game' for them is defined by their conception of winning, or rather the goal *they* wish to achieve and not the goal of the leaders. So, the leaders are playing the game of running 26.2 miles faster than anyone else whilst the tail-enders are playing the game of running 26.2 miles in under 4 hours, or simply 'running' 26.2 miles.

Many of these sports (running, mountaineering, skiing), that are not exclusively "purposive" have been noted for their intrinsic stimulation. This is in contrast to some of the clearly competitive sports where the immediate gratification is replaced by a sense of achievement or satisfaction *after* the event. The pressures of top level performance in competition can be unconducive to "aesthetic" experience. High-board divers, gymnasts and figure-skaters need to concentrate too hard on the technicalities of initiating twists and turns to fully 'enjoy' the activity for itself. Such performers might achieve greater stimulation when they step down from the competitive level to a standard that is less demanding; one in which they can relax and appreciate a more "aesthetic" response. This is not always the case. Egger quotes several top athletes who have considered their best performances to have been when they stopped 'thinking' about the activity and simply did it.

Interestingly, the juxtaposition of "aesthetic" experiences in sport with an elimination of a subject-object dichotomy coincides with Robert Pirsig's conception of Quality in his *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*,

> [Phaedrus] noted that although normally you associate Quality with objects, feelings of Quality sometimes occur without any object at all. This is what led him at first to think that maybe Quality is all subjective. But subjective

> pleasure wasn't what he meant by Quality either. Quality *decreases* subjectivity. Quality takes you out of yourself, makes you aware of the world around you. Quality is *opposed* to subjectivity . . . eventually he saw that Quality couldn't be independently related with either the subject or the object but could be found *only in the relationship of the two with each other*. It is the point at which subject and object meet.[41]

Egger discusses just such experiences as the "merging of action and awareness", whereby "the long distance runner, for example, no longer becomes aware of the individual aspects of his stride length or breathing. But he is also unaware of not being aware." The individual in the activity no longer takes an outside perspective from which to analyze and adjust their performance, "that state of egolessness can become transcendent to the extent that the perception of one's self is submerged in the action being performed."[42]In contrast, totally ego-involving competition demands a more cognitive level of awareness and does not allow such instinctive and self-reflexive experiences. During these "flow" experiences, the artificial structures we create with our objective versions disappear. Drug users typically lose track of time, distance and scale. Distance runners and swimmers (particularly in long periods of training) lose themselves in the involvement of the activity and long hours become lost to their different reality. Obviously, these sports (and others that involve gliding, soaring and floating), like certain drugs, are more likely to produce feelings of calmness and peace than some others. Body contact and team sports are not so conducive. These have too many outside distractions.

Theodore Roszak notes that we seem to possess an almost innate need to transcend the material world of technology, where everything that is 'real' can be measured or observed, into an egoless state. This might account for the increase in meditation and spiritualism, and what he calls the "new religion".[43]It might also account for the "running boom". Egger cites others of the same opinion,

> Dr. Thaddeus Kostrubula, San Diego psychiatrist and runner, describes the peace achieved through running as "an altered state of consciousness that can be called a kind of Western meditation". Similarly, a rock climber quoted by Csikzentmihalyi in *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety* describes his experience as "an entirely different universe that the usual daily things don't affect that much".[44]

The philosopher William James has labeled such experiences as "unaccountable invasive alterations of consciousness".[43]They are moments when we cease to polarize the ego and the object. Pirsig considers this awareness as more 'real' than our everyday objectification and grants ontological status to this event, "The easiest intellectual analogue of pure Quality that people in our world can understand is that *Quality is the response of an organism to its environment*".[44]

*The Real Sportsworld*

We have looked at two very contrasting versions of reality: an objective, quantitative version and an ego-less, Qualitative one. We have found that both produce different and conflicting visions. Our emphasis, however, has been on denying that the 'scientific' version should take preference over the 'aesthetic' version. As suggested, our ideology will determine which frame of reference we choose if we are to make claims that "sport is . . .", and proceed to define it. To use the terminology introduced earlier, we should be sympathetic to an attributive plurality of sportsworlds. But can we take any one of these 'worlds' and say it is more 'real' than any other?

## III. THE PROBLEM OF UNIVERSALS

Words are important tools for the worldmaker. They are used to categorize and label: and by so doing, they shape the world into an ordered taxonomy of similarities and differences. The *general term*, especially, is one tool that clearly 'builds' worlds. That is, those words which label characteristics, qualities, and properties divide the world up into classes.

The way in which the general term creates a version of the world can be illustrated as follows. Suppose we identify a number of phenomena that naturally recurr again and again in the world (such as species, shapes, colours). However, the objects that possess these qualities are varied: such that a number of objects all possess the same characteristics, whereas other objects possess some of these characteristics and other characteristics as well, and yet other objects possess completely different characteristics. For instance, we might have in front of us a white mouse, a white carnation, a pink elephant, a red rose and a red blood cell. Now, if we choose to group things according to colour we would end up with a different arrangement than if we choose to divide these objects into animals, other life forms, and non-organic objects. We are suggesting that the things themselves contain certain qualities or characteristics. We then say that all those objects containing one set of qualities belong to a certain class of things, whilst those that do not are not members of this class of things. As Paddick states,

> Defining or naming (other than proper naming) is a process of classifying our experiance on the basis of similarities and differences. Phenomena with certain similarities are put into one group and given a name on the basis of similarities chosen. In this process, certain differences between the phenomena, so grouped, are ignored, perhaps because they are not noticed or perhaps because they are regarded as unimportant. So a particular grouping emphasizes some similarities and differences and ignores others.[1]

The process of definition is one of drawing boundaries. This does not mean that the things

themselves have no similarities with each other, but simply that we choose to group different individuals according to some similarities and not others.

This is a useful process. Conceptual thinking involves the use of these general terms rather than of the individuals. So, if we invite some Indonesian visitors in Canada to go curling, and they ask, "What is curling?" we can reply, "Oh, it's a popular Canadian winter game". If these people understand the concept 'game' then they will understand something about curling. Suppose they do not. We might know that they play badminton and tell them that curling is the same sort of activity. Of course, we are not saying that curling is played with raquets and a shuttlecock: although our visitors could take it that this is what we mean. If this is the case, then we could proceed to show them many different 'games' until they grasp what they all have in common (by noticing how the activities resemble each other whilst, in many respects, being different). This process is called *ostensive learning*. Staniland argues,

> It is the possibility of ostensive definition which makes the use of general words possible. For even if actual ostensive ***definition***, in the sense of using ostension to introduce a completely new word into the language, never occurred at all, ostensive ***learning*** (i.e., learning the meaning of a general term from being shown examples) would still have to occur. The only way of learning the meaning of a general term seems to be from verbal explanation, and this presupposes some terms learned ostensively as a starting point. And it seems plausible to suppose that ostensive learning is possible only where ostensive definition would have been possible too.[3]

The use of ostensive learning presupposes an important claim: things do share common properties or characteristics.

If this is so, we can go further and say that *only* if a thing possesses the certain properties of one class is it a member of that class. Our definitions tend to be mutually exclusive: an object is either 'X' or 'not-X'. Sometimes the properties defining an object to be one thing and not another are called its *essence*. For instance, Steve Podborski possesses many characteristics: he is a male, a skier, has brown hair and so on. But none of these things represent his *essence*. That is, his hair colour could be different, he could be a bank manager, he could be a she (Stevie Podborski?). Given all these changes, he/she would still be a human

being. So, hair colour, sex, occupation etc. are not *essential* characteristics of being a human being. An essence, then, is that set of properties above all others that define an object to be what it is, regardless of any extraneous or incidental qualities that it may also possess.[3]

*The Essence of Game Playing*

Socrates asks, in the *Meno*, "What is the character in respect of which they don't differ at all, but are all the same?".[4]This character will be a thing's essence. Wittgenstein admonishes us to *"look* and *see"* whether there must be something common to all games that makes them games, and suggests that if we do, "we will not see something that is common to *all*, but similarites, relationships, and a whole series of them at that. To repeat: don't think, but look".[5]

This is good advice. If we take it, we will find that a problem arises when we try to determine the essence of game playing. Game playing is a difficult concept to define. It seems that all definitions will either include an activity into the class of things called 'games' when it should not be there (e.g., marathoning, mountain climbing and high jumping[6]) or, alternatively, exclude an activity which is generally considered to be a game (e.g., leap-frog and ring-a-rosie).

What is actually in question is whether our definition is purely *stipulative* (we draw the boundaries ourselves), or whether it is *essential* (we locate the boundaries that are already there). The *non-essentialists* argue that if we look and see, we will find that there is no essence of game playing. However, they defend this claim with evidence that the way we use the word 'game' in everyday language is too vague to allow us to give a unitary definition of game playing. But, this does not disprove the essentialist's position. The essentialist maintains that it makes little difference if we misuse the word 'game' in everyday language. If we determine the essence of game playing, and it does not include 'mulberry bush', then this is not a game regardless of whether we call it one.

This may indeed be an untenable position, but the non-essentialist cannot use the tests for a stipulative definition to disprove an essential definition. They must, rather, take up the ontological argument of whether essences exist. Because, surely if they do, then the

essentialist is correct: if a particular definition of game playing establishes mountain climbing as a game then it *is* a game and our lexical use of the term 'game' is wrong. So, is the world 'made' by words or do words simply describe it?

**Words and the World**

The problem we have come across is often called the *problem of universals.*'Contemporary arguments over the possibility of a unitary definition of game playing give this problem scant notice and, consequently, fail to take into account the difficulties with their assumptions behind the use of general terms. Aaron claims that,

> What we call conceptual thinking involves the use of the general word and no explanation of the successful use of the general word is possible without facing and solving the problem of universals.[4]

Aaron points to a variety of questions concerning general words. One that concerns us here can best be shown in the following example.

The purpose of proper naming allows us to refer to a particular person or object of that name. The sentence, 'Aristotle is a man' contains the proper name 'Aristotle', enabling us to relate to a particular man of that name. It also contains the general term 'man', telling us that 'Aristotle' is a particular example of the species 'man'. But is there anything in the real world that is the exemplification of the term 'man' in the same way that Aristotle is the referent of the name 'Aristotle'? This is the basis of the problem of universals.

*Universals and Particulars*

We would all acknowledge that there are *particulars:* things such as men, chairs, and games. The point in question though is whether, in addition to these, there are such things as the species *man*, the class of all *games*, the property of *being a chair*, or even the colour *white*? These latter entities are what philosophers have chosen to call *universals.*

To illustrate how problems arise, let us consider an example. Before us are two

white rugby shirts. The two shirts appear identical in so far as colour, size, etc. We can describe their agreement in colour, in two ways:

A. Both rugby shirts are the same colour, white.

B. Each white rugby shirt is exactly like the other white rugby shirt.

At first appearance these two descriptions appear to amount to the same thing; that there are two *white rugby shirts*. However, many philosophers would argue that the two descriptions are different. In fact, that they are incompatible: one being correct and the other wrong. Let us examine the situation more closely.

To begin with, it is indisputable that being 'white' is not synonymous with being a rugby shirt. There exist red, black, green shirts. If we dyed each shirt green, they would still be shirts. The colour white, then, is something separate. It is a characteristic that can be applicable to a number of particul*ir* things. Thus, in the same way that we can group all rugby shirts together in a box we can place all white things together in a box by virtue of the fact that they all participate in one common nature. Although, in the first instance, it might be clear what it is to be a shirt, in the case of being white my collection of things might be questioned by another: "That's not really white, it's more grey." As well as questioning particular cases, one might question my basis of categorization. The example given suggests a categorization shown by statement 'A'. That is, the colour white is exhibited by both shirts, and should be exhibited by all things collected in the box of white objects. 'Whiteness' is thus one numerically distinct characteristic: a *universal*. Statement 'B' suggests that the two numerically different shirts happen to be exactly similar: two *particulars*. Categorization in accordance with statement 'B' would be based on my placing white things in the box because they all resemble each other. Thus, statement 'A' accepts the existence of *universals*. In other words, if we believe that 'white' is a universal, we can say that things are white because they have the quality of 'whiteness'. Statement 'B' attempts to get by without such recourse.

On further examination of common language, we discover that proper names stand

for particulars; while adjectives, prepositions, verbs and substantives are less clear. (Pronouns are mainly particulars, but are ambiguous.) Russell argues that, in fact, these things are universals. As such,

> It will be seen that no sentence can be made up without at least one word which denotes a universal. The nearest approach would be some such statement as "I like this." But even here the word 'like' denotes a universal, for I may like other things, and other people may like things. Thus all truths involve universals, and all knowledge of truths involves acquaintance with universals.[9]

The existence of universals does not appear to be a problem. But, we might ask what the rugby shirts would be like if they did not possess the property 'whiteness'. Surely, we cannot have a colourless rugby shirt. In other words, all shirts must be coloured and we can only have coloured things.[10] If we only admit to particulars, how could we define things?

*Particulars and Definition*

It might be that the only thing that we can feel sure of is that there are particulars. Some would argue that these are the only things that exist. Such views can be seen as represented by some of the earlier work of Quine. For example,

> One may admit that there are red houses, roses, and sunsets, but deny except as a popular and misleading manner of speaking, that they have anything in common. The words 'house', 'rose', and 'sunset' are true of sundry individual entities which are houses and roses and sunsets, and the word 'red' or 'red object' is true of each of sundry individual entities which are red houses, red roses, and red sunsets; but there is not in addition, any entity whatever, individual or otherwise, which is named by the word 'redness' nor, for that matter, by the words 'househood', 'rosehood', 'sunsethood'. That houses, roses and sunsets are all of them red may be taken as ultimate and irreducible.[11]

To feel the need to prove that there are other things, such as universals, it must be seen that particularism does not give a clear account of general terms. To do this we must look at how general terms would work if only particulars existed.[12]

Let us consider the case of the eccentric taxonomist. Suppose that I wished to gather all games together into one class of things. To this end I build a huge box and actually place

instances of these games inside. If my categorization was completely arbitrary, I might begin by collecting a number of different activities together and call these 'games'. By deciding what goes into the box and what stays out, I have given a meaning to the term 'game'. I have not conceded to a universal idea of *game playing* but have relied on particulars. Thus, whenever I use this term I am referring to all things inside the box. But because of my relatively arbitrary classification nobody else can be sure of what I mean by my term. To remedy this I would have to make a visual list of everything that the box contains.

Unfortunately, my box does not contain every single 'game' that ever was, is, or will be. How can I explain what should be in the box without having every single example of 'game' on my list? Nobody but myself would be able to carry on my collection without making any mistakes. For example, if my box contained only two board games, somebody might collect all the board games in the world and present them to me, "There you are, *games*". But I might point to several 'games' being played over in the park and say, "No, no. What about softball and football". So, without knowing the meaning of my term 'game' somebody else would need to have a list of all things that should be in my box to be able to use my term correctly. Obviously, this is not how we categorize. I have relatively little experience of some games but I can identify activities as games when I see them. Thus, we do not put things into boxes marked 'X' and 'not X'.

Assuming that I have not finished my collection I could turn to my successors and say, "My box is only half full, you'll have to finish the job. This is basketball, it's the first 'game' I collected. I've based my collection on everything that resembles it". If basketball is the only example that I give to my successors they might fail to notice the correct resemblance and only bring back activities involving a ball, or those between two teams. I need to use many examples to show how the comparisons were made. Although I am not showing my students everything in the box I am showing them enough for them to be able to decide which particular features are important in being a 'game'. What is happening in fact, is I am saying that the term 'game' should be used in such and such a way. This is identical to the procedure called 'ostensive

learning' that we mentioned earlier. However, it is not necessary that we must admit to universals and then to essences. We can deny that we notice common characteristics within the objects themselves and simply admit that particulars resemble each other. The difference between these two can be expressed by saying that one view explains generality in terms of common properties, the other in terms of resemblances.[13]

*Recurrence and Resemblance*

The first theory[14] begins by comparing things which are exactly similar. It is argued that if two balls are exactly the same size, shape, weight, colour, air pressure, etc., then, we cannot deny that the same properties are to be found in both of them. Thus, an exact-resemblance term is one that asserts, whatever can be applied to A can be applied to B if and only if B has exactly the same properties as A. So, if A is a white rugby shirt and B is a white soccer ball, then A and B are exactly similar, in terms of colour, because they both possess the property of being white. The plausibility of this argument stems from our use of language that fails to distinguish what we mean when we say that two white objects are the same. The recurrence theorist asserts that there is a property of the shirt called "the colour white" and a property of the soccer ball called "the colour white". Both these properties are the same. That is, these two exactly resemble each other for this reason. Both objects possess a recurring property. In terms of exact-resemblance the recurrence theorist appears unshakeable.

The argument would appear to be refuted by those objects which are not exactly similar, but are named by the same general term. For instance, sky-blue and navy-blue are both shades of blue, but are not identical. The recurrence theorist must claim that both the sky-blue object and the navy-blue object possess the property of being blue. If this is the case then we can ask whether a navy-blue object possesses two colours: blue and navy-blue. If it does then we must admit to all properties as being different. In other words, if blue and navy-blue are two colours, then any colour which is not an exact-resemblance of navy-blue must be a different colour. Their connection must simply be their resemblance. If this is so then why bother to claim that two exactly similar colours are the same entity?

This rejection of the recurrence theory can be applied to games. If we observe two chess games being played on boards that are exactly similar, with pieces that are exactly similar, rules, etc., then we might be inclined to think that each game possesses properties that are exactly similar. We can then compare a chess game to a badminton game. They are clearly not the same activity, but, do they both possess the properties of being a game in which case they are exactly similar in terms of that property? In this case, it seems to be so. But when we consider borderline cases or vague examples is there a common property? In contrast, the resemblance theory denies this, and, to its advantage, offers an explanation for the inclusion of borderline cases. Resemblance is obviously a matter of degree, so, marginal cases must be expected. The main opposition to this is Russell's accusation that resemblance itself is a universal,

> If we wish to avoid the universals *whiteness* and *triangularity*, we shall choose some particular triangle, and say that anything is white if it has the right sort of resemblance to our chosen particular. But then the resemblance required will have to be a universal. Since there are many white things, the resemblance must hold between many pairs of particular white things; and this is the characteristic of a universal. It will be useless to say that there is a different resemblance for each pair, for then we shall have to say that these resemblances resemble each other, and thus at least we shall be forced to admit resemblance as a universal. The relation of resemblance, therefore, must be a true universal. And having been forced to admit this universal, we find that it is no longer worth while to invent difficult and unplausible theories to avoid the admission of such universals as whiteness and triangularity.[15]

The first evasion of this attack would be to claim that each instance of resemblance is a particular and that the resemblance between resemblances is also a particular. Admittedly, there will be an infinite regress, but, at least it is an infinite regress of particulars and not universals. So, when the resemblance theorist claims that G1, G2, G3, Gn, etc., all resemble the standard white particular G, what they mean is that G1 has resemblance R1 to G, and G2 has resemblance R2, and so on. They must then concede to Rr to compare the resemblance between R1 and R2. The problem here with something like games is that the resemblance theorist must identify the ideal game in order to compare others to it, and this is exactly what they declare cannot be done as it implies properties of the ideal games. All we can do with resemblance is

compare two particulars, and with the borderline cases of games there may be no resemblance whatsoever. However, the resemblance theory implies that there is a common similarity, all members of a group resemble each other. We must at least identify some sort of "nominal" essence.[16]But, instance A and instance Z might be so far removed that there is no similarity between them. Wittgenstein attempted to answer this by suggesting that games are a group of "family resemblances". A might resemble B, and B might resemble C, though this does not necessarily result in any connection between A and C. How is it then that they are all called games? Renford Bambrough summarizes Wittgenstein's position,

> The nominalist says that games have nothing in common except that they are called games. The realist says that games must have something in common, and he means by this that they must have something in common other than that they are called games. Wittgenstein says that games have nothing in common except that they are games.[17]

That is, there is no group of properties that represents 'games'. This is neither a resemblance theory, nor a recurrence theory. The latter is looking for the property of 'game' not a group of particulars. In contrast, the resemblance theorist tries to assert that I can add a game to my box of 'games' because it resembles *all* the games in the box. Paradoxically, this infers that they all have the property of 'game playing'. If they all had a "family resemblance" I could end up with a box of all different things, with no common property. My general term would have little use. Either the resemblance theory is inadequate or the term 'games' is not definable.

We appear to be concerned with two separate questions here: (1) Is the use of general terms purely arbitrary? and, (2) Are there any such entities as universals? ***Realists*** would answer "no" to the first, and "yes" to the second. Such an example would be the recurrence theory. The resemblance theory also rejects the possibility of the former question, but could be forced to also affirm the latter (if 'resemblance' is a universal). If it still denies the second question then it cannot maintain the first, for the reasons shown above. The extreme ***nominalist*** view that accepts (1) is rarely held by philosophers. It is precisely this rejection that has initiated the problem. Despite the attempts of the theory of resemblance to reject the existence of

properties for general terms, our conclusions indicate that we must consider properties further.

*Classes, Sets and Properties*

Logic has been used a great deal to attempt to prove or disprove the existence of universals.[18] The contribution of logic in this context arises through the theories existing concerning "classes" or "sets". The grouping of things under a general name because of similar properties is similar to the naive theory of classes. Accordingly, to the general term 'games' there corresponds the *class of all games.* Anything which is a game is a member of that class, and anything which is a member of that class is a game. The comparison we wish to make is that anything which belongs to the class of all games, has the property of being a game. So, in like manner to the above, anything which is a game has these properties, and anything having these properties, is a game. Consequently, if we can determine the existence of classes, then, we can establish the existence of properties. However, the converse argument is the one most often used. If we can disprove the existence of classes then we can disprove that properties are entities.

Classes may in fact be members of further classes: the class of all games, contains (in Loy's opinion[19]), the class of all sports; or the class of all games requiring more than one player contains the class of all team games. Similarly, properties can be considered as having further properties. The value of "set" theory then, in this instance, is that classes and properties appear to be the same.

There is one condition though that makes it simpler to consider classes. Classes can be determined by their membership, whereas this is not the case with properties. For instance, if I 'idolised' the Edmonton Oilers' Hockey players and nobody else, then the class of people I 'idolise' would be identical in membership to the class of Edmonton Oilers' players. Yet, the property of being 'idolised' by me is not identical with the property of being an Oilers' team member. They are two separate properties that are possessed by the same entities. So, when the class of things which are X are identical with the class of things which are Y, they are not necessarily the same properties. The necessary condition for us to assert that X and Y are

identical properties is that X=Y and Y=X. The fact that I only 'idolise' the Oilers' players and nobody else, and that I 'idolise' all the Oilers' players and not just some of them, implies that the property of being an Oilers' player is the same as the property of being one of my 'idols'. The importance of this is to establish that properies can be considered similarly to classes, but must be substitutive to be determinate by membership. Thus, classes are simpler concepts than properties, and we can assume that any difficulties arising out of the use of the former must also arise from use of the latter.

We are mainly concerned here with the objection to assuming the existence of classes, and hence of properties. This arises in one form from Nelson Goodman.[20]He rejects the unconditional use of classes because of the tendency to distinguish entities associated with classes without distinguishing the content of classes. He argues that the class theory enables us to fallaciously establish more entities than actually exist. For example, if we have 3 entities, A, B, and C, then, we can combine these to produce four composite entities: A-together-with-B, B-together-with-C, A-together-with-C, and A-together-with-B-together-with-C. These 'new' entities are all different from each other. But a theory of classes enables us to create even further entities from these resulting entities. Thus, (A,B) can be joined with (B,C) to produce ((A,B)(B,C)). Class theory allows this and asserts that this is a different entity from (A,B,C) because it has different members.

Goodman argues that this is effectively the same as (A,B,C) in terms of its content. He prefers to call these "individual sums". The "individual sums" are the same if their contents are the same. The false claim of 'set' theorists is that for every class there exists a property, because many classes are fictitious and the properties will be also. Consequently, we cannot claim that for every class of entities there is a predicate which is represented by a property. Neither can we pass from properties to properties of properties and so on.

Another way of looking at this is to alter the conventional way of making statements. The class theory allows us to say that "This is (A,B,C)" is different from saying that "This is ((A,B)(B,C))." We can change the structure of the proposition to say that, "This belongs to the

class of things which all have the property of being (A,B,C)." In this way, by not distinguishing content, the class theory can create new classes from a combination of others. Goodman argues that we should not use theories of universals that assume the existence of classes (realist theories in other words). Rather than asking whether properties actually exist, according to Goodman and Quine, we should be asking whether it is viable to use theories which assume that they exist. Despite the soundness of this argument it does not prove that predicates are not represented by properties, nor that we cannot pass from properties to properties of properties. An analysis of subjects and predicates has shown that this is possible.

*Universals and Predicates*

The arguments against 'set' theory tend to suggest that expressions claiming that predicates are properties can be falsified. When we seem to be saying that, "Badminton has the property of being a game" we are saying that "Badminton is a game", nothing more and nothing less. This would seem to contradict Aristotle's distinction between subjects and predicates, particulars and universals.

Aristotle distinguished between those entities that can be "in" something and those that are "said of" something.[21] First, "being in" indicates a relationship which may exist between a particular dependent upon another particular. For instance, a 'smile' is a particular, but cannot exist independently of a face. The face can exist without a smile. Second, "being said of" refers to a relationship between a universal and a particular. In the statement, "Basketball is a game" the universal *game* is "said of" the particular, basketball. So, Aristotle claims, "Of things themselves some are predicable of a subject, and are never present in a subject" (those entities which are "said of" something but are not "in" anything).[22]

Common sense tends to support this. Strawson takes up the subject-predicate analysis to examine general terms and their use.[23] Strawson differentiates between the way in which subject and predicate expressions introduce their terms. A predicate demands a proposition. If "a game" is used as a predicate expression then completion of the statement "is a game" results in a proposition: "Chess is a game." But, using "a game" as a subject expression

does not demand a propositional clause. We can complete the sentence beginning with the subject "A game....." into any kind of remark. Strawson then compares this to the particular-universal distinction. Such a distinction, he sees as comparable by considering particulars as "collecting" universals which it exemplifies. (A soccer ball collects the universals, roundness, bounciness, etc.) Universals can be considered as "collecting" particulars that exemplify it.

The universals collected by a particular make up its continuing identity as a particular, whereas the particulars collected by a universal are linked by resemblance or commonality. The important distinction is that the universal requires occasions for its occurrence. We cannot locate the universal itself but can only recognise it when we see it. We can say that such and such an object is white, but knowing what it means to be white does not allow us to locate examples of *whiteness*, only of white things. In contrast, we need to know the universals of identity to know a particular.

However, we can identify some universals that provide their own principles of identity. "A game" is an example of this type of universal. Strawson calls these "sortal" universals. Hence, sortal universals can be subjects of sentences. If we have fully grasped the meaning of 'games' we will know what particulars count as instances of games, what boundaries define games, what distinguishes a game from not-a-game. Colours are not sortal universals, but "characterising" universals. Just because we understand the meaning of the word 'white' does not mean that we can define it, or identify boundaries for it, or notice what counts as the same white thing.

Characterising universals cannot be individuals. We can count white 'things', but not whiteness. With respect to the last section, a predicate term such as "is a game" can identify a property that can be predicated of itself by other properties. We cannot have a class of whiteness, only of white 'things'. Abstract concepts, such as "consciousness", "institutionalisation", and so on, can only be characterising universals, as they are not distinguishable other than their meaning. In other words, we cannot speak of "consciousness"

without reference to an individual thing, just as we cannot speak of redness, but only of red things. Thus, characterising universals presuppose sortal universals, and can be predicated of them. Consequently, the assertive, or propositional statement generally introduces the universal as the predicate and never the particular. The universal may also sometimes be the subject.

This suggests that Goodman's conclusions were wrong. To distinguish these sentences in which the subject is a particular and the predicate a universal, Strawson classifies expressions as being of "class (1)" or "class (2)". These are, respectively,

> expressions such that one cannot know what they introduce without knowing (or learning from the use) some distinguishing empirical facts about what they introduce, [and] expressions such that one can very well know what they introduce without knowing any distinguishing empirical fact about what they introduce.[34]

"The game" is an example of a class (1) expression, and "is a game" is an example of the class (2) expression. A predicate expression is always a class (2) expression, but subject expressions can on occasion be used as class (2) expressions. An example would be any in which the universal becomes the subject, such as, "Games require a lusory attitude". Strawson, thus, presents several possibilities in which the particular–universal distinction actually occurs in expressions. These are:

(a) Subject expressions of class (1) introducing a particular. (e.g. "The game")

(b) Predicate expressions of class (2) introducing a universal. (e.g. "is a game")

(c) Subject expressions of class (2) introducing a universal. (e.g. "Games")

He identifies a fourth which need not concern us here. But, the excluded possibilities are:

(d) Subject expressions of class (2) introducing a particular.

(e) Predicate expressions of class (1) introducing a universal.

(f) Predicate expressions of class (1) introducing a particular.

(g) Predicate expressions of class (2) introducing a particular.

Strawson argues that the above framework can be used to identify which expressions introduce particulars, and which introduce universals. We can now examine more closely what "language" is most appropriate for our use.

**A Language of Nominalism or Realism?**

Although we began by questioning whether games possessed an essential set of properties, it is more meaningful here to define the languages of nominalism (those that only admit to particulars) and realism (those which admit to universals as well as particulars) and ask which serves our purposes better.[25] For example, are certain forms of nominalist language, such as the resemblance theory, adequate for definitions or statements of fact that we wish to make? If scientific knowledge is knowledge of the interelations of specifiable characters should it be a realist language? Because two things are coloured should we consent to the meaningfulness of expressions that purport to 'common qualities'?

The distinguishing facet of a nominalist language is that it will contain an infinitely large number of names of individuals. If there are predicate names at all then these can only be meaningfully used in connection with individual names. It could not contain the terms "universal" or "property" or "relation". What Strawson termed "subject expressions of class (2)" could not be used. So, we could not talk about a particular general term, such as "institutionalisation". If we associate a nominalist language with respective nominalist theories, then, we can consider three alternatives. The first, equatable with extreme nominalism, allows no predicates at all. The second admits to one relational predicate, which is "resembles". The more moderate nominalism permits any number of predicates that are of universals.

*Extreme Nominalism*

There are really no philosophers that maintain this view. It is interesting, however,

in its denial of the necessity of predicates in an ideal language. As the brief discussion on Strawson shows, many arguments for realism take their starting point as the fact that one predicate may apply to many things, or that universals "collect" particulars that exemplify it. But extreme nominalism presents many problems

We can make no useful empirical statements by only referring to proper names. I would not be able to make the statement, "This is a game." without qualifying it in terms of other games. Because we cannot allow the general term "game" to stand for a property I am forced to say that "This is identical with Game 1, Game 2, Game 3,..." etc. until I have listed all the games in the universe; not just at this moment, but that ever were or ever will be. This is the only way our predicates can be defined if they do not refer to univerals. Ostensive learning, for one, shows that this is not how things work, so, we must reject a language of extreme nominalism. By doing so, we make an important claim: that general terms are not merely arbitrary classifications.

*Resemblance Theory*

Undoubtedly, this type of language is far richer, and more useful, than the former. We are still admitting to the individuals Game 1, and Game 2, etc. but can create a definition that only requires the admission of the relational predicate, "resembles". To look further at the use of a resemblance theory language let us reject Russell's claim that it admits one universal and simply accept that it admits one relational predicate.

There are three ways in which the resemblance theory is used in application to pairs of individuals. (1) We can consider *total resemblance*. This refers to the relation between the whole phenomena and another, not merely to particular qualities. Thus, baseball resembles cricket in its overall form. (2) There is also *exact-part resemblance*. Draughts resembles chess in the sense that draughts is played on a board that exactly matches (is indistinguishable from) the board used to play chess on. (3) We can also observe *inexact partial resemblance*, whereby soccer has some qualities which are similar to, but do not exactly match, those of rugby. The resemblance theorist attempts to stay with (1) if at all possible. In order to do this they must

choose what examples will define the class of things under the general name. We can stipulate what games best exemplify our common understanding of that term.

To use (1) it is not enough to say that "X is a game if it total-resembles Y and Z". What the resemblance theorist must say is that, "X total-resembles Y and Z as closely as Y and Z total-resemble each other." But this does not work, as the example of games shows.

Let us consider Game A as being competitive, played between teams, played with a ball; Game B is non-competitive, played with a ball, played on one's own; Game C is competitive, played on one's own, but not with a ball. For Game X to total-resemble A, B, and C we must first establish how A, B, and C total-resemble each other. Clearly there is no one commonality between all three. Consequently, we might include any activity that is competitive (such as 'war') into a class of games because it resembles A, B, C, as much as A, B, C, resemble each other. One way of overcoming this might be to increase the number of comparables to which we are seeking a resemblance. We might then say that Game X is indeed a game if it total-resembles all games more than the extremes of dissimilarity A and Z resemble each other, but has less total-resemblance to the most similar games M and N. Such an attempt leads to the problem of estimating comparative degrees of resemblance.

Then we are in fact turning to *inexact partial resemblance*. In this case, resemblance, might involve listing points of resemblance and points of difference, but, how many points are needed to determine resemblance? This is why so many definitions of games have attempted to define the necessary and sufficient conditions to satisfy the predicate "is a game". Games must have rules, more than one player, competition, and so on. But invariably, this type of definition is either too broad or too narrow.[16] In any case, to decide what conditions make up a game we must still make a decision as to how many standard examples to use in order to accumulate all the necessary factors. We can never be sure whether our selection is too large or too small. So, the idea of total-resemblance cannot work and inexact partial resemblance requires a degree of similarity which cannot be accepted as given to experience. How can we decide when something resembles a game enough to be called a game, and when it resembles

games but not exactly enough?

*Moderate Nominalism*

Moderate nominalism permits the use of an unrestricted set of predicates rather than just one relational predicate. Moreover, no attempt is made to reduce predicates to individual names, or to regard the functions of predicates and names as similar. The importance of the use of predicates rests on the conditions that the predicate term cannot occur in the subject place of a sentence. The moderate nominalist language, is, however, flexible enough to allow the re-arrangement of the sentence structure into what appears to be a realist-sounding form. We may say, "Alienation occurs amongst sport participants." if we mean simply that "Players are alienated." This may at first seem to be indistinguishable from a realist language, but it is. What it implies is that "alienation" cannot become the subject term of a sentence in such a way as to state a proposition, "Alienation is a dehumanising element." Let us, now, look at realist languages.

*Realist Languages*

Just as there are many possible nominalist languages, there are also many realist ones. However, all realist languages have several things in common. First, they allow the use of predicate terms as subjects of a sentence. Second, the language is far richer, as it requires predicates that are meaningfully applied to non-individuals. Third, the predicates applicable to non-individuals will include such things as "an instance of", "is characterised by", "is similar to", "is a colour".[27] With respect to what we looked at in the previous section non-individual names can include the names of "classes", or of so called "abstract particulars". However, most philosophers prefer to talk of attributes (properties, qualities, characteristics) and relations.

The first step in introducing a non-individual name into our language is the signification of the predicate into a subject term. This simplest way of looking at this is the creation of a noun from another element. So, we can create the subject terms, "Human", "Chairs", "Games", "Institutionalisation".[28]

The realist language requires two specific predicates of non-individuals. The first is the relational predicate "is an instance of", which enables us to translate "*x* is F" into "*x* is an instance of F-ness". The second predicate is the expression "has universalness". So, let us take an example of how a realist language could work. If we try to establish a realist notion of "a game" we are interested in establishing instructions for the use of the term "games" of such a general sort that they can be used to compare any observable quality to our notion.

For the sake of argument, let us assume that the predicate "is a game" is perfectly specific in the sense that two activities called "games" will exactly match in nature. We need to discern exactly what "games" refers to, so that we can say without any hesitation, "This is a game." Let us accept that we have been able to do this. To then classify an activity as a "game" we must observe it and notice its particular characteristics or nature that allow us to classify it with respect to these characteristics. Now, if we are to observe its nature, and the nature is that of a game, then we have understood the general term "games". This is known as the "characteristic being" of the universal. But, the important distinction is that this nature is not just some part of the structure of the game. More importantly, it is not part of any activity such that it cannot be observed by observing a different activity.

Thus, a universal is not a *part* of a particular individual. We cannot determine the meaning of "games" by trying to identify elements of its structure. To determine *redness* we do not associate it with any part of what we are observing, such as the sunset, petals, bricks, etc. Likewise, "games" are not the sum of the necessary and sufficient parts that make up the activity. If this were so, the universal "human" would produce the predicate two armed, two legged, upright, talking, and so on. It is surprising that most definitions of games have tried to do just this: establish the characteristics common to all games, rather than the nature of a game. This is not a 'realist' definition of a universal, but more in tune with *inexact-partial resemblance*, and yet, criticisms of this type of definition have been termed "non-essential".

The question that must be asked is whether this is possible. It is certainly meaningful if it is, because it enables identification of all instances of the universal without

needing to first know every instance of the "class". The value of the universal then becomes its extension to all *possible* objects. Knowledge of the universal enables us to apply "is a game" to any activity that has not yet been played, if it actually is a game. So, to understand a predicate term we must be able to pick out the property or "signification" of the term.

In conclusion, we must accept that realist languages are far more meaningful and varied. However, owing to the relative flexibility of a moderate nominalist language, would it not be better to accept its ease of use as preferential to the difficulties arising with realism? Possibly the best solution is to accept a methodological realism without making any claims to the existence of the properties themselves. This would not offend against the logical argument that proof of a theory by deduction from its assumptions is not proof of the assumptions. If we are to use a realist language then we need to observe the rules, such as Strawson's, concerning which universals are predicable of predicate terms or which predicate terms can be used as subjects. This at least will avoid the reification of abstractions, such as "institutionalization".

If this is acceptable, then Suits' definition[29] is not too broad if it includes marathoning and mountain climbing as games when we generally do not describe them as such: they are games, regardless of our normal usage of that term. Similarly, no purpose is served by referring to a lexical definition of 'games' to illustrate the vagueness of this term. After all, most dictionaries simply tell us how we use the word in question, and we are often wrong about words.

## IV. LIFE, THE MEANING OF

The term 'philosophy' has taken on several usages, other than the traditional notion of 'the pursuit of wisdom' or 'the study of things and their causes'. One of these associates philosophy with a set of rules or principles guiding our conduct. For instance, we often hear of a company's or store's 'philosophy' with regard to customer relations. Another (perhaps even more common) conception is that philosophy is concerned with questioning the meaning of life. This is manifested in a number of aphorisms that supposedly offer profound insight into our most important matters: those of life and death, love and happiness. So, we sometimes ask, "What is your philosophy?" and await a revealing reply, summing up everything in one pithy but meaningful maxim: "Life is like an ice-cream cone, you've gotta lick it".

### What Does It Mean To Ask: "What Is The Meaning Of Life"?

The question, "What is the meaning of life?" has several different meanings in itself and, depending upon which sense of the word 'meaning' we use, is seeking one of several different types of answer. Some of these usages are more relevant to us than others.[1] It is useful for us to identify those which are most commonly meant when we ask this question.

*(1) Meaning as teleological purpose*

Very often we are asking for some sort of justification for life itself: what is the purpose of it all? This is generally associated with our overall theological or cosmological view. We are part of God's plan or a step in the upward progress of intelligent life forms. One contention, based on this mode of meaning, is that our lives can have meaning only on the

assumption of God's existence and of human immortality. Tolstoy writes in *A Confession*,

> What real result will come of my life? – Eternal torment or eternal bliss. What meaning has life that death does not destroy? – Union with the eternal God: heaven.[2]

Purpose gives things value according to this sense of 'meaning'. Consequently, those activities that serve little teleological purpose have less value (if any at all) than those that do.[3] By this virtue, play and games are generally considered to be frivolous, non-purposeful, and *meaningless*. If they do have any value, then, this is because they serve some extrinsic end, such as: developing co-ordination and motor skill, maintaining health and fithess, building character, and teaching moral behaviour. All of these things are important in our overall life scheme. And of course, the meaning of life itself lends justification to those things that enhance it.[4]

*(2) Meaning as causal inference*

Every time I run I get very dizzy and faint: does this *mean* anything? That is, is there any necessary connection between two events that lead us to associate them as causally related. The fact that I am alive means that my parents had sexual intercourse at least once (although there are several other possibilities). A child is traditionally a symbol of the consummation of marriage. Conversely, if the meaning of sexual intercourse is derived from its effect of creating life, then contraception removes its meaning.[5] This might be one reason why some people find artificial insemination, surrogate parents, and childbirth outside of marriage difficult to accept: life has meaning because of its symbolic representation of love, marriage etc. (The Virgin Birth, of course, being an exception). In this sense, our lives contain a vast network of meanings; of all their antecedents and consequences. We might even sum meanings to people's lives. Thus, Einstein had a more meaningful life than John Smith, and the lives of Jesus Christ, the Gautama and Muhammed have, by this virtue, been the most meaningful of all. This leads to another usage.

*(3) Meaning as significance or importance*

Teaching philosophy and climbing mountains both mean a lot to me: they are both important aspects of my life. The notion of 'meaning' as significance is also closely related to purpose and causal inference. Thus, a life can take on some sort of objective significance and importance. Being a doctor or a social worker has more meaning than being a cricketer because these occupations are important or significant for others as well as for oneself. The important things are those that really matter.[6]If it does not matter whether I live or die then my life cannot *mean* very much to me. This can lead to quite a subjective notion of significance, whereby my life has meaning if I decide that it matters what I do with it. My life, then, might take on a plan, or even a semantic meaning, if I intend it to have certain properties that I associate with human life.

*(4) Meaning as a semantic relation*

Synonymy is a fundamental semantic relation. 'Life' can be defined in terms of the functioning of body parts (as in a clinical definition of life and death). Also, we can consider it as any form of organic matter. In this way, we can ask: "Is there life on Mars?". An answer to the question of the meaning of life has sometimes been sought by determining the semantic meaning of human existence. That is, we can ask what differentiates our existence from that of other animals or life forms. This is often claimed to be our rationality, or our capacity for self-reflexive knowledge.[7]Philosophers such as Aristotle, Kant and Sartre base their moral theories on the belief that the more meaningful life is one in which we rise above instinct and habit and act on reasoned principles.

Bernard Suits' thesis, in *The Grasshopper: Games, Life and Utopia,* is that life is a game we are playing.[8]Accordingly, to live means 'to play a game', which in itself means,

> . . . to engage in an activity directed toward bringing about a specific state of affairs, using only means permitted by specific rules, where the means permitted by the rules are more limited in scope than they would be in the absence of the rules, and where the sole reason for accepting such a limitation is to make possible such activity.[9]

Suits makes it clear that he is not simply recommending that viewing life as a game might be a beneficial philosophy to adopt.[10] Any recommendation to live this way follows a statement of 'fact': "Life is a game. Live accordingly". As Suits firmly states, "I am not arguing for the possibility of viewing life *as though* it were a game. My purpose has been, rather, to set out the conditions for life's really being a game".[11]

*(5) Meaning as objective meaningfulness*

The first four notions are often united in some way to try to find and arrive at an objective meaningfulness. Those seeking to supply life with objective significance usually see themselves fulfilling a role or function in something much larger than their own lives. Chains of justification are built that grant importance to individual lives by virtue of their part in a much more significant whole: the society or state is more important than the individual; the team is more important than each player.

The most significant lives are those spent in the service of the State, in the advancement of scientific knowledge, or rejoicing in the glory of God. These things themselves are justified according to their teleological purpose. Sport, in general, is none of these things, although it has been granted significance by those who would use it for nationalistic purposes and the vindication of an ideology.

However, these chains of justification must end somewhere. If my life is significant because it is part of God's plan, then God's plan must be intrinsically significant. Otherwise, God must also be part of some other plan, which is also part of some other plan, and so on. But, if we avoid this infinite regress of justifications by calling a halt to it somewhere, then why can life itself not be intrinsically meaningful. The shorter the chain, the less likely it is that there will be a weak link.[12]

*(6) Meaning as intrinsic meaningfulness*

If nothing can be gained by trying to subsume trivial justifications under more significant purposes, then it might be that those activities which seek such a means of

justification are less *meaningful* than those which are intrinsically significant. Indeed, absurdity arises, in part, out of this inflated pretension that our undertakings *are* important and serious.[13] Play, on the other hand, has no such aspirations. It is undertaken for its own sake and requires no further justification. But when our aspirations lead us to believe that what we are doing is more serious than *merely* playing, our subjective notion of what significance life has for each of us is replaced with an objective view of its significance overall.

Sport is, arguably, more serious than play. But this can only be due to sport's purposes to produce the best team, the fastest runner, the strongest weightlifter. However, we no more live life in order to reach its end than we climb mountains merely to stand on their summits. Sport, in taking itself seriously, loses much of its meaningfulness by replacing its intrinsic significance with the desire for external justification. Does it really matter how far the world record is for dwyle flunking?

## The Limitations Of A Good Life

The question of whether life has any meaning, in the last two senses above, is often considered to arise because life is finite (the assumption being that mortality makes the meaning of life a problem). For the remainder of this chapter, we will consider whether this is so, and examine the value of play, games and sport in life, based on some of the 'problems' we encounter.[14]

### *Is Limitation A Misfortune If It Is Inevitable?*

That death is a bad thing presupposes that what it ends is good.[15] That is, life cannot be a bad thing because it ends in death, otherwise death would be a good thing because it brings an end to what is bad. If death is to have a negative value because it terminates some other state (assuming that it has a value at all), then it must be because this other state is positively valuable.[16]

Life, then, must be good and death its deprivation. Thus, no matter what the

hardships and sufferings are, we often exclaim, "It's good to be alive". But, if the badness of death depends upon the goodness of what it ends, it must be because it is a limitation of what is possible and not a deprivation of what is already possessed. For instance, the abrupt end of Gordon Bank's soccer career as England goalkeeper, after an automobile accident, can be considered a misfortune. Whereas, Dino Zoff's eventual retirement after some 20 years as Italy's goalkeeper will not be considered tragic. This can only be because Zoff's career has run its natural course and Bank's career was terminated before it had been fully realized. Similarly, the death of Robin Smith, whilst climbing, at a very young age can be regarded as a tragedy. But is it less tragic if we live to an age where death is considered inevitable? This seems to entail that it is not a tragic thing to die at 90 or 100.[17]

Death is not a bad thing that so far Jim Clark has had more of than Graham Hill. It can only be a bad thing if it is a limitation of possible goods. If death is inevitable, but life still good despite its finitude, then it cannot be a bad thing to die at the end of a normal lifespan. Death can only be a bad thing because it prevents an infinite life. This does not entail that the finite portion of life is itself good. So, if it is good to be alive, it is because life contains many things that we find desirable. These are generally certain states or activities. It is *doing* things and *being* alive that make life so good and not simply the state of existence itself. And, as Nagel states, "If there is no limit to the amount of life that it would be good to have, then it may be that a bad end is in store for us all".[18]

*Is Limitation Necessary For Meaning?*

What is the meaning of life, given its finitude, when an infinite life appears to be more desirable? This question has given rise to the idea that life must have meaning conferred on it by its finitude. Thus, limitation is not a misfortune if it is normal to the situation and inevitable. From this we often make the claim that mortality is an essential defining characteristic of being human.[19]As a result, a quite perverse view has arisen that immortality is in fact undesirable. This is claimed by Victor Frankl,

> What would our lives be like if they were not finite, but infinite? If we were immortal, we could legitimately postpone every action for ever. It would be of no consequence whether or not we did a thing now; every act might just as well be done tomorrow or the day after or a year from now or ten years hence.[20]

Is it that finitude is necessary to give things meaning? A game would never be decided if its duration was not complete and an accomplishment cannot be measured while its achievement is still in progress. An account of the meaning of life based on the teleological purpose of the activities within it requires that the chain of justifications for our plans finishes somewhere. Purpose and function presuppose an end to which our activities strive.

Play, then, is the pastime of the Gods, of the immortals. It serves no extrinsic purpose or function. A life spent in play and pleasure-seeking will have a bad ending as it will also be an unsatisfied life: one which cannot be complete because there is no limit to the desirability of its continuation. This provides us with the banal hebetant that a life well spent brings a happy death, just as a day well spent brings a happy sleep.[21] Thus, Frankl adds,

> In the face of death as absolute *finis* to our future and boundary to our possibilities, we are under the imperative of utilizing our lifetimes to the utmost, not letting the singular opportunities – whose 'finite' sum constitutes the whole of life pass by unused.[22]

It is imperative that we *do* something with our lives. Play and games are trivial things. They are *mere* amusements. A life well lived is one in which we have achieved some end or goal. Because we are going to die, it is important that we make *use* of our lives in such a way that it can be said that our lives have been worthwhile. Given this, Nozick argues, Frankl's view does not necessarily follow,

> Even on his own terms, perhaps, you do best thinking you are mortal and very long-lived (having no good idea of approximately when the end would come, whether after 200 or 2,000 or 20,000 years), while in fact being immortal.[23]

We become achievement orientated and our lives take on a purpose or meaning. This can be a semantic meaning if I intend my life, for example, to be that of a doctor or a member of the

clergy. On this basis, those actions that are not part of the definition I have given to my life-plan are not a ***meaningful*** part of my life. Of course, I can intentionally pursue marathon running, such that my life includes many instances of partaking in marathons, without intending the meaning of my life to be that of a sometime marathon runner.

A problem arises if we try to imply that some life-plans are more meaningful than others. If my life is more worthwhile because the meaning I give it has some sort of significance then, we fall into the trap of trying to justify life because of its objective value. Ultimately, the question of whether *my* life is significant is not concerned with the value that my life or death may have for others. But, if my life is meaningful because it seems worthwhile to me, then are there any restrictions at all on what would be a meaningful life?

*Is My Life Worthwhile?*

We are often caught between viewing our lives from either a subjective or objective set of considerations. For me, at this particular moment, writing these words seems important. This might be because this chapter is an integral part of something much bigger, which is in itself part of a larger plan that I have for my life. But, it also might be that I simply desire to write about the meaning of life: and next week I will write about trout fishing in California. Obviously, I feel that it is a ***worthwhile*** pursuit, or I would probably not undertake it. (I am not compelled to in any way). However, from an objective point of view, my writing might not be worthwhile. In the light of great works by great philosophers, my achievements could be judged to be of little value.

Similarly, I might later reflect on what I considered to be worthwhile at the time and ask whether I should have acted differently. I spent a great deal of time training to be able to climb harder routes. Now that the benefits of that training have long gone and I never did climb the routes I dreamed about, I might question whether I should have put so much time and effort into that particular endeavour. More often than not, we consider that it was worth it at the time. It was enjoyable and satisfying in itself, regardless of whether it served a purpose or was successful. But, if we take a more general view of our aims in life then, we end up weighing the

value of the pursuit according to whether the desired goal is a significant part of our overall life-plan.

Life-plans are generally expected to be life-long, and longer, bigger plans are considered to be more meaningful than smaller ones. If Frankl's view is acceptable, we should surely be willing to die after our life-plan is complete. To continue would be an anti-climax. We desire to go to our death-beds with the knowledge that we have fulfilled our goals and are ready to die. Our goals in sport are not life-long or we would willingly die on their completion. Perhaps, Mick Burke's death on Everest in 1975 was not tragic after all. What better way to go: he fulfilled his ambition of reaching the summit of Everest, why should he wish to live longer?[14] But of course, he would have wished to live longer: climbing Everest is not what life is all about, is it?

It might be that I desire my life to be full of lots of little plans: that is, that I lead a "full and varied life". I would like to look back and list the achievements that I have reached along the way: climbing Mont Blanc, gaining a doctorate degree, writing a book or two, raising a happy family, building my own house, repotting the geraniums, keeping my original teeth, etc. But these smaller aims culminate in the overall goal of "doing all the things I *really* want to do".

Our ambitions and goals make the short-term aims worthwhile. In this regard, we often measure the value of our endeavours accordingly: those activities which contribute to our life-plan are more worthwhile than those which do not; and, my life-plan is more worthwhile if it serves some extrinsically valuable purpose. Obviously, I might spend my whole life in pursuit of one particular goal, such that all my actions are worthwhile by virtue of contributing to that end. Yet, if this goal is, 'saying the words "life does have meaning" as many times as possible' then, it would not be considered that my life was worth living.

The conflict between an action's worth based on its purpose and the overall worth of the goal which it serves results in our emphasis on the objective value of our activities. A hierarchy of objectively worthwhile occupations would invariably place an architect above an actor above an athlete. It seems as if we do, in fact, hanker after some sort of immortality. It is

important that death does not wipe out all traces of us. Our lives must be more than worthwhile to ourselves in some sort of trivial sense: they must also be significant. It should not be as if we had never existed at all.

### Immortality and Absurdity

Perhaps the most futile attempt at defying death is the idea that we can achieve immortality through our children. (So, is the death of a childless only son a greater tragedy than normal because it wipes out the traces of his ancestors?) Yet, we do not generally believe that our chain of descendents will continue on infinitely. 'Immortality' is more readily gained by leaving an impression on the world.[11] A *meaningful* life in some sense achieves permanence by virtue of making a permanent difference to the world. However, the difference we make has to be a certain kind of difference. The kind of significance that we seek is such that others know that the mark that is left is due to oneself.

Life is meaningful, in the sense of being significant, if what is left behind can be associated with our plans, choices and actions. The mark we leave must be attributable to the people that we are. That is, surely it would not be enough to be remembered as the spectator who was killed when the President was assassinated. Our successors must be able to evaluate the mark or trace that we leave behind and what part that played in our lives. So, is immortality granted to Roger Bannister for running the first 4-minute mile, to Gary Sobers for hiting six 'sixes' in six balls, and to Edmund Hilary for being the first to the summit of Everest.

Why are these 'traces' important (if indeed they are)? It might be that the traces themselves are simply indicators that a person's life was worthwhile or important. The desire for immortality is thus a desire for recognition that one's life was meaningful. However, this would be circular if one's life is only meaningful if it leaves behind a permanent mark. We might escape this by arguing that only those lives which are meaningful will leave important traces, but it is important that these traces be recognized.

Being remembered will obviously not be any consolation to us when we are dead. 'Immortality' must be known beforehand to follow our lives, if we are to feel that our lives have been worthwhile. It would not be enough to go to our graves thinking that we have made a mark on the world when in fact we have not. To live a worthwhile life, we must not only think it to be meaningful, but it must actually *be* meaningful. This does not present a problem for the 'great', such as Pele and Billie Jean King, who have achieved 'immortality' in their own lifetime. Others have to endure not knowing whether they will be remembered. Consider, for example, the case of British sprinter Harold Abrahams. When Alan Wells won the gold medal for Britain in the 100 metres, at the 1980 Summer Olympic Games, Abrahams same feat in 1924 became recognized as a singularly remarkable achievement. No British athlete between 1924 and 1980 had won a gold medal in any of the Olympic Games' sprint events. Abrahams was further 'immortalized' in the film *Chariots of Fire*, some fifty-six years after his Olympic success. Like all great artists, we are willing to tolerate a gap, as long as we are confident that our time will come.

None of this, of course, makes dying any easier. Given the choice, we would all prefer an obscure but infinite existence to an objectively significant but limited lifespan. It is just that we do not have the choice and achieving something worthwhile during our finite stay in this world is one last straw that we can grasp before admitting to life's absurdity. However, we pay the price for associating a meaningful life with significance and permanence. If life is only meaningful when it is lived in such a way that our life has been worthwhile, or that it is better that we have existed (and this is not for some trivial reason that once we were here we enjoyed it and were glad we had the opportunity), then the eventual annihilation of all traces of our significance also annihilates the meaningfulness of life itself. We have burnt our own bridges behind us: by taking ourselves seriously, we make life absurd.

***The Absurd***

Absurdity is not merely associated with a lack of purpose. It arises through a collision between the seriousness with which we take our lives and, on reflection from a more

objective point of view, the permanent possibility that seriousness is pointless. Our lives are full of effort, success, failure, plans and ambitions. Whether we are egoistic or altruistic, concerned with pleasure, luxury and wealth, or knowledge, human rights and ecology – we *pursue* our life as a full-time occupation. We devote tremendous energy to our appearance, health, career, sex lives, family and friends. Nagel goes further and suggests that seriousness is unavoidable.

> We cannot live human lives without energy and attention, nor without making choices which show that we take some things more seriously than others. Yet we have always available a point of view outside the particular form of our lives, from which the seriousness appears gratuitous. These two inescapable viewpoints collide in us, and that is what makes life absurd. It is absurd because we ignore the doubts that we know cannot cannot be settled, continuing to live with nearly undiminished seriousness in spite of them.[16]

It would be different if we could not reflect on this situation, but wander on without the inescapability of doubting our 'cosmic' position. Yet, we pride ourselves on our propensity for self-consciousness: that we do not act merely on instinct and impulse.

In order to escape this absurdity, we have two choices.[17] Either we 'give up' our self-reflexive nature or we stop taking ourselves seriously. Obviously, the first alternative is impossible. It is possible that we never reach a heightened state of self-consciousness or we can somehow 'lose' it. But, we cannot consciously refuse to be self-reflexive because that process is itself a self-reflexive one. Choosing to stop taking ourselves seriously is not impossible, but both unacceptable and, ultimately, self-destructive.[18]

Perhaps, we can use this stepping-back and viewing of our predicament to our advantage. It would serve a purpose if we realize that reflection on the meaning of life does not provide us with an understanding of what is *really* important, as if we can judge the significance of our lives accordingly. But, we do recognize that the only justification which can be given is that things are worthwhile in themselves (albeit a 'worthless' recognition itself[19]).

If awareness of our 'absurdity' is a true perception, then nothing can be gained by trying to escape it. We must simply come to terms with it. Camus suggests lending life a sense of dignity by defying the inevitable conclusion of suicide. The *Myth of Sisyphus* tells the story

of a man condemned by the gods to push a heavy stone to the top of a mountain. The stone then rolls back down to the plain and Sisyphus returns to repeat his task, only to return again and again. Sisyphus' plight represents the futility of life. But he does not give in,

> [He] knows the whole extent of his wretched condition: it is what he thinks of during his descent. The lucidity that was to constitute his torture at the same time crowns his victory. There is no fate that cannot be surmounted by scorn.[30]

Sisyphus has the benefit of defying the gods. He can at least shake his fist at somebody. Scorn does not provide *us* with a satisfactory answer. It is our own awareness that has led to our absurdity, and not that the world has failed to live up to our expectations. In contrast, we do not pursue our games and sports seriously because of defiance, "I know it is pointless trying to get a little white ball into a four-and-a-half inch cup from 350 yards away with only a stick to help me, but *I'm damn well going to do it anyway*". Rather, we ignore the futility of the situation and consider the activity itself worth pursuing. When we become too involved, we often stop and say to ourselves, "It's only a game" and return to it with no less seriousness, but accept the irony of it all.

Play is not a diversion from *reality*, it is one of our most *meaningful* activities: one in which we enter into the situation knowing its purposelessness, but still choose to go on with it for its own sake. Even if life is not actually a game, it is very much *like* a game. Of course, in games, as in life, there will always be those who think that dwyle flunking really *is* important.

## V. MY DEATH

It does not tend to concern us that millions have already perished. We give little thought to the extinction of the dinosaur and the dodo, to the annihilation of the Incas and the Aztecs. Even less so do we mourn our faceless and nameless ancestors who carried us from the cave to civilization. And what of all other material things that change or are destroyed at every moment; the leaves on the trees, insects under foot: does their ceasing to be sadden us?

### The Cessation of Personal Being

The death of significant others, such as friends and relatives hints at our own mortality but does not, according to Heidegger, give us any experience of what it is to die,

> Death does reveal itself as a loss, but rather as a loss experienced by the survivors. The suffering of this loss, however, does not furnish an approach to the loss of Being as such that is "suffered" by the person who died. We do not experience in a genuine sense the dying of others but are at most only present.[1]

In general, it is not the ceasing to be of others that sickens us, although we are undoubtedly saddened at their "loss". It is the thought of our own extinction that is so depressing. When we contemplate the nothingness into which these others have slipped, it is our own mortality that we fear. As Taylor says,

> The nothingness that sickens and appalls, the nothingness we would give anything to drive back, if only for a while, is only our own. The perishing of other things, even other persons, even persons loved, saddens, and of course carries the acute reminder of what awaits us. But it is this last, alone, that fills us with dread. Dying, and then being dead, being no more, being nothing why this total calamity? Why this to crown the most beautiful of lives?[2]

Is this, then, perhaps the most important of all philosophical topics: understanding our own death? Many philosophers have believed so: Montaigne suggests that to learn philosophy is to learn how to die. Others believe that an understanding of death provides insight into the meaning of life: Spinoza states in his *Ethics*, "A free man thinks of nothing less than of death, and his wisdom is not a meditation upon death but upon life".[3] Albert Camus has gone so far as to question why our awareness of the absurdity of life, does not result in suicide. This, he feels, is the only genuine philosophical issue.

*Is Understanding My Death a Problem?*

We are more than just mortal beings, we are moribund. That is, not only are we capable of dying, it is inevitable that we will die. We all accept this. This is why we take out life insurance policies or make a will. However, this only entails that we understand that someday we will be dead, and does not show that we appreciate what it means to die. Does this latter appreciation present a problem?

A problem is a symptom of a disorder.[4] In the case of an intellectual problem (as we have here), the disorder consists of a tendency to think about a certain area of thought or language (the concept of death), using a misleading or inappropriate model (associating my death with the state of my being dead). The problem is removed when we no longer have this tendency. However, the treatment of a philosophical problem is similar to the treatment of an illness: inattention to the problem and 'distractions' from it, such as pain-killers or sedatives, are not 'cures'.[5] The only 'cure' is to bring the analysis of the problem out into the open and achieve greater insight into the nature of the problem and how our thought is governed by it. In this instance, the problem of understanding my death can be 'treated' by asking what it means to say, "I am going to die".

Our understanding of this statement is not a simple matter. We can experience the changes occurring as a result of the death of another: the death of the organism or the absence of the 'person' from our immediate world. But we cannot gain any appreciation of our own death by trying to focus on what it would be like to be dead, in this sense of disappearing from

the world. For this reason, the epicureans (3rd Century BC) claimed that death should not trouble us, "Death is nothing to us . . . It does not concern either the living or the dead, since for the former it is not, and the latter are no more".[6] Wittgenstein identifies the conceptual problem that gives rise to this misunderstanding, in his *Tractatus*, by use of an analogy. We fail to understand what it means to die if we try to imagine what it would be like to *experience* death. This would be like trying to see the limit of our field of vision. The limit of our field of vision will always be beyond what we can actually see, because what we can actually see will, by definition, be within that limit. Thus, "Our life is endless as the visual field is without limit. Death is not an event in life. Death is not lived through".[7]

*My Own Death is Unimaginable*

Goethe has been attributed with the following pronouncement: "It is entirely impossible for a thinking being to think of its own non-existence, of the termination of its thinking and life".[8] What Goethe seems to be suggesting is that it is a contradiction to *think* about *not-thinking*. However, we frequently imagine what it might be like when we are dead (in the sense of what it would be like for those remaining after our deaths). But, arguably, in all these instances we imagine that we really survive as spectators. Moritz Schlick states,

> I can easily imagine, e.g., witnessing the funeral of my own body and continuing to exist without a body, for nothing is easier than to describe a world which differs from our ordinary world only in complete absence of all data which I would call parts of my own body.[9]

Similarly, John Wisdom has declared, "I know indeed what it would be like to witness my own funeral – the men in tall silk hats, the flowers, and the face beneath the glass-topped coffin".[10] We can certainly imagine what our own funerals will be like, but there is a fundamental difference between this and imagining what it would be like *for me* to witness *my* own funeral. Of course, I can easily picture *a* funeral with my body in the coffin and with me there (invisible and intangible) watching it all. Yet, how does this differ from me imagining being witness to a funeral without being there at all, except as an image in the coffin? There is an implicit

disassociation, here, of 'my body' or 'my corpse' with 'me' or the word 'I.'[11] Let us distinguish between the event of my actual (one and only) funeral and an image of what it would be like by placing inverted commas around the latter ('my funeral'). Thus Anthony Flew concludes,

> If it is really I who witness, then it is not my funeral but only 'my funeral' (inverted commas). If it really is my funeral, then I cannot be a witness; since I shall be dead and in the coffin. Of course I can imagine (image) what might be described as watching 'my own funeral' (in inverted commas). But . . . what I can imagine would not really be mine. Again I can imagine my own funeral . . . But now what I am imagining is not my witnessing my own funeral but merely my own funeral.[12]

The difficulty in understanding what it means to die, then, is grounded in the tendency to think of death as an event in life. We must leave the attempt to imagine what it would be like to be dead, which is prompted by witnessing the death of others, and in doing so eliminate the position of some sort of eternal observer. We cannot leave the continuation of the world in the picture of our own deaths. Wittgenstein points out, "The world in death does not change, but ceases".[13]

**The Phenomenological Account of Death**

Our death is generically different from the death of others. The death of another, according to Koestenbaum,

> . . . involves the *elimination of an object within the world, and not of the observing ego or subject.* In other words, if a man examines closely – that is, phenomenologically – what he means by the death of another person, he recognizes that *he himself is still in the picture:* he is the observer contemplating the scene, even if the scene may be only in his imagination. Death is an event within the world, while the life–world, the world of human experience purdues. The situation is altogether different if we subject the contemplation of *my own* death – the death of myself – to a similarly careful phenomenological analysis. . . . In analyzing my own death, I must examine more than merely the physical disintegration of my body. My own death means the total disintegration and dissolution of my *world.*[14]

In our earlier discussion, concerning imagining what it would be like to witness one's own funeral, the central fact was the continuous presence of my own self or ego as an inescapable

observer. When contemplating my own death, the central fact is that I as the observer die or vanish. My death is not simply the cessation of my heart beat or the death of the body that is associated with my person, "the death of myself is the anticipation of the extinction of the Transcendental Ego or of the ultimate subjective observer of the world". My death is effectively the annihilation of the world itself, as I am no longer in a position to experience the continuation of the world (even of a world without my presence): "the anticipation of the death of myself is experienced as the ultimate threat to Being itself".[15]Understanding my death, then, is of greater importance than coming to terms with the death of others, if I am to discover the real meaning of death in my life.

*Heidegger's' Authentic Conception of Death*

Heidegger has argued that one's awareness of death can direct one's attention to the self and, consequently, what it means to *be*. Moreover, Heidegger asserts that an individual *must* have ontological awareness to exist *authentically*. That is, authentic existence can only be realised by an explicit awareness of what it means *to be*. Such awareness must necessarily involve the understanding that one is *going to die*. Every human existence is seen as one of "Being-toward-death." *(Sein zum Tode)*[16]. Mortality is, thus, not a mode of ceasing-to-be, but a mode of being. In this respect, *inauthentic* existence is one without recognition and acceptance that each of us will die. It is a mode of existence in which one has hidden or forgotten what it means to be.

One cannot achieve an *authentic* understanding of life by trying to focus on what it is to be dead, or even to die (for the reasons given earlier). To have an authentic existence we must look to death as a *possibility*. To know that it is possible not-to-be turns our attention to the meaning of being-able-to-be. In this respect, we do not even have to comprehend that we *will* die. It is enough to know that we *can* die.

It would seem logical to suppose that being on the "threshold of death's door" (for example, surviving an automobile accident) provides a stark realisation that one *can* die. Heidegger argues that this is still an *inauthentic* way to relate to death. Death, in such instances,

is always seen as something that is actually there, and the emotion is one of *fear*. But it was seen above that our *own* death can have no meaning as an actuality. Hence, when one fears death, it is a fear of dying, or of someone else's death.[17] The inauthentic existence *flees from* the face of death, in an attempt to cling on to life. This is not to say that avoiding risk is inauthentic, or that deliberately taking risks is authentic. Rather, inauthenticity arises when one sees death as event and not an ever present possibility, resulting in an attempt to avoid the event of death.

Consider the following statement by Gaston Rebuffat, one of France's top mountaineers and member of the successful 1950 Annapurna expedition (the first climbers to succeed on an 8000 metre peak):

> Miserable, wretched safety, a pitiful word which leads to the suppression of enthusiasm, the best part of life. Do not "live", just be content to exist, it's simpler and safer. Man is forever striving to add years to his life without thinking about adding life to his years.[18]

Undoubtedly, Rebuffat is mainly concerned here with seeking experience and fulfillment. Nevertheless, the inadvertent suggestion is that individuals run away from death. In fact, rather than "striving to add years" to our lives, we are really attempting to add distance between the present and the future inevitability. It is a backing away from death, not a prolonging of life. Death is constantly seen as a negation. The ultimate, in this sense, is not the creation of immortality, but the abolition of mortality. A simple play on words, maybe, but it shows we *fear* the end of life. Such fear is an inauthentic awareness of death.

Authenticity is achieved by realising the full significance of our ability not-to-be. Reflection on such a possibility reveals our terrible finitude, but also establishes our undeniable uniqueness. We are finite because we exist *unto* death. Death is in fact the existential of totality, the uttermost of one's potentialities, embracing and uniting all other potentialities. I am unique in that only *I* can understand what it is like for me to be going-to-die. For Heidegger, death determines and embraces the totality of human existence. Whilst Being is still there one has not exhausted all one's possibilities. The final possibility, that of being able not-to-be,

delimits all other possibilities.

A complete picture of our existence can only be seen when all the possibilities are actualised, and they are not actualised until they are no longer possible. Thus, finitude comes to presence in its most privileged way in death. It would seem then that understanding one's existence in an authentic way cannot be accomplished. After we die, we can no longer look back upon existence, but during life existence is not complete. Yet, we do not have to actually die in order to see that we are going-to-die. The perspective that should be sought can be achieved, not through a realisation of death in its actuality, "Being-at-an-end" *(Zu-Ende-Sein)*, but, through acceptance that life is "Being-towards-the-end" *(Sein zum Ende)*. Although it is possible not-to-be, death itself is the actuality: the cessation of all possibilities. Sartre expresses this as follows,

> Thus death is not *my* possibility of no longer realising a presence in the world, but rather *an always possible nihilation of my possibles which is outside my possibilities.*[19]

For Sartre, it is the freedom of possibility that gives life meaning. But to be aware of that freedom, we must recognise the certainty of death. Yet, we are often conscious of the certainty of death. That is why we insure our lives or make a will. However, this is not Heidegger's interpretation of the certainty of death. This is the everyday, "empirical", interpretation, and can be expressed by the extremely *un*certain statement, "I am going-to-die, sometime." The certainty of our mortal existence is softened and hidden by the uncertainty of when we will die. To maintain its full significance, the authentic understanding of certainty dismisses the 'when'. The key to achieving an ontological understanding of what it means to be is acceptance of the fact that, "I am going-to-die." With this in mind, the statement of daredevil stuntrider, Evil Knievel, seems less absurd than on first reading,

> Auto racers, they defy death. I stare it right in the face. I believe we were born dead. I did not ask to be put on earth. I have accepted that dying is part of living.[20]

A further distinction of authentic existence is that one's death is one's own: *I* am going-to-die. *I* alone will die *my* death. If there is but one thing that we can call our own, it is our own death. It cannot be shared with anyone else. Hence, only *I* can know what it *means for me* to be going-to-die. The awareness of the possibility of death is as something that is unavoidable. It is a possibility that is inevitable. The anxiety that may develop from such awareness, Heidegger calls *dread*, rather than fear.[21] As has been said, just because we all appreciate that we will die at sometime, it does not necessarily follow that we realise what it means to be going-to-die.

**Encountering My Death In Sport**

Being close to one's own death does not give us the experience of dread, but rather of fear. In this respect, risking one's life for the sake of fear does not guarantee any authentic awareness of death. It is not, in fact, how Paul Nunn's statement would seem to suggest,

> The climber knows the pleasure of pulling his body up apparently impossible and dizzy walls, the relief of overcoming truly fearful obstacles, sharp contrasts of day and night, cold and extreme heat, pain and exhiliration. Fear is essential to him as it is inhibiting to the layman, and the value of the activity is determined by the possibility of crumpled corpses combined with the acutest sense of being alive.[22]

Undoubtedly, to survive a dangerous situation makes one very thankful to be alive, but this is the relief from the fear of the actuality of death. It is significant that comments such as this, used by others to explain why climbing gives one greater self-awareness, are so easily rebuked by one who says, "I climb, but deliberately avoid truly fearful obstacles and extreme conditions, because I don't want to risk my life. I don't need to scare myself witless to enjoy the experience of climbing." Such a view is not merely limited to the less committed climber, or the recreational mountain rambler. Solo climbers put themselves in extreme situations, where a fall will mean certain death, but rarely do they feel *fear*. The route is a challenge of their ability not their courage (at least directly), and they rarely climb unless they are confident that they can succeed. Dave Breashears said of his first ascent of *Perilous Journey* in 1975,

> There was no point in going up there if I even thought I could fall off. It wouldn't have been worth it if I scared myself. I would have considerd it a failure.[23]

Nevertheless, climbers like Breashears, Charlie Fowler, Jim Collins, Ron Fawcett, and Jim Erikson are well aware of the possibility of their being killed. These men have continually climbed at the highest standards of free climbing without protection. Erikson compares it to a game of Russian Roulette,

> It's a question of how many cartridges you want to put in the gun. You can get away with a few spectacular climbs, but if you go up and do 10 or 20 of them, you're stacking the odds against yourself.[24]

In a similar way, Ron Fawcett writes,

> . . . when soloing "on sight" it's just go for it; to linger on hard ground I find gripping. The mind starts playing games, telling you that hold is loose or the E.B. is going to roll off that tiny ledge, but that is all part of the game ***- to have one's neck in the noose and manage to pull it out at the last moment.*** But will the trapdoor ever open below my feet, I often wonder.(emphasis mine)[25]

Yet, these men cannot be said to be representative of 'mountaineers'. Few rock climbers or mountaineers ever solo hard, serious routes. But to gain awareness of the possibility of one's ceasing-to-be does not necessarily require such extreme risks. Indeed, it does not even require *risk*. When considering *danger* the tendency is always to make it a case of probability.[26]

Climbing is considered to be *dangerous* if a higher percentage of people that climb are injured than those simply carrying on the everyday necessities of life. A popular comparison is between mountaineering and driving an automobile. Statistics are gathered and then translated to account for the time spent climbing compared to the time spent behind the wheel of a car. Other factors, such as age range, are related. One tends to be doing more 'risky' things between the ages of 16 and 24, for example. Is climbing then, any more 'risky'? It is worthwhile considering that many of these comparisons are made by those who wish to say that climbing is *not* dangerous, especially Outdoor Educationalists: "Look at the facts, far less people are injured

climbing than are injured crossing the street."[20] Such statistical analysis may show that experience and knowledge can enable one to climb 'safely' and with little 'risk'. However, this has nothing to do with 'danger'. 'Risk' deals with *probability*. 'Danger' is concerned with *possibility*. I wish to suggest that overcoming 'danger' can lead to an authentic awareness of life, whereas taking 'risks' is more likely to produce fear, which in the Heideggerian sense is inauthentic.

*The Distinction Between Danger and Risk*

To begin with, we must ask what we mean by the word *dangerous*. All too often 'danger' and 'risk' are used interchangeably. But, as stated above, they can be seen to be very different. Risk is primarily concerned with 'chance'. We weigh up the likelihood of an occurrence and the consequences, then decide whether it is *too* risky. The very fact that the vast majority of climbers use a rope for protection indicates that climbing is risky. The rope minimises that risk. The rope does not prevent the climber from falling off, it simply prevents them from killing themself when they invariably do. In fact, many top climbers take fall after fall, whilst attempting new routes, in the knowledge that the rope and their protection reduces any 'risk'.

This is why many people argue that climbing is not dangerous. But, in comparison, 'danger' need not necessarily involve chance. Imagine a road that has been undermined and has collapsed in one large spot, leaving an extremely deep hole. The hole is fenced off and several hundred metres down the road on either side, signs are placed saying (or indicating) "DANGER". The signs do not say that there is a high probability of an accident. Rather, they imply that "There is 'danger', there, in that hole." Nobody need ever fall into the hole, but it would still be dangerous, because it is *possible* that someone might and consequently injure themselves. Compare this imaginary situation with a real one: sport parachuting. The risk involved is really very small. Although statistics show that the longer one continues the sport the more likelihood of one having an accident, most of these are relatively minor and occur through unfortunate landings.[21] The chance of a parachute failing to open, and the reserve also failing, is very minute. But Klausner's studies show that the period of most arousal (fear) is just prior to

the parachute opening. Clearly, it is a dangerous situation even though it is not particularly risky: it is *possible* that one could die.

We can associate the 'fear' of the participants with (what we have termed, according to Heidegger) an inauthentic awareness of death. Yet Klausner, and others who have studied stress and anxiety, suggest that fear decreases with frequent aquaintance and acceptance of the situation.[9] Experienced sport parachutists become accustomed to the situation and in fact receive their main stimulation or 'thrill' from the experience of 'free-fall'. It is ironic that most people would deny that the thought of death concerns them when they jump. They reject any suggestion that they jump for the thrill of seemingly defying death. But it is undeniable that they do gain some awareness of the possibility that they could die. It is ingrained in their minds when they pack their parachutes so meticulously and take such strict safety precautions. The *possibility* of death is inherent in the sport (but not exclusively), and it is one of the main reasons why they jump. I make such a bold assertion on the premise that a sky-diver would answer in the negative, the question, "If we were made of rubber and could harmlessly bounce when we hit the ground, would sport parachuting be the same sport?"

We can now distinguish between two identifiable situations that are paradigmatic in our analysis of sports such as mountaineering and sky-diving:

(a) *Risk situations* are those where an undesirable outcome is probable. For instance, if a climber continues to undertake high-level expedition climbs to the Himalayas and encounter objective hazards (such as avalanches, ice-falls, exposed unroped climbing) over which there can be little or no control, then sooner or later the climber is likely to be seriously injured or killed. This is regardless of the climber's skill and experience and is born out by the deaths of expert mountaineers such as Ian Clough and Nick Estcourt in avalanches (on Annapurna and K2, respectively).

(b) *Danger situations* are those where, given the fulfillment of certain antecedent conditions, an undesirable outcome would probably result. But, the 'risk' is removed (or alleviated) if the antecedent conditions are not fulfilled. For instance, correct use of the rope

negates the conditions required to render death by falling (the undesirable outcome) probable. Danger situations still maintain the possibility of an undesirable outcome, as mentioned earlier. But, particularly important for our discussion is the awareness of the participant in the activity that the sport is dangerous. This requires the conscious decisions and acts of the participant to eliminate the antecedent conditions of risk. The implication is that an individual could wander into a risk situation unaware. (This has been the case in many accidents where inexperienced people have suddenly found themselves in extremely risky situations). Alternatively, an individual could be in danger without realising it (if, for example, the instructor has taken control of the antecedent conditions). These aspects introduce the important factor of 'awareness' if the participant is going to gain an authentic understanding of the possibility of death through these sports.

As a result of this distinction, we might identify those sports that are clearly risky, and those that are dangerous. So, motor-car racing, Himalayan mountaineering, cave diving, and hang-gliding could be considered as 'risk' sports, whereas rock-climbing, sky-diving and kayaking are 'danger' sports. However, we will not proceed with this, here. Rather, we will consider all of these sports as 'danger' sports. By doing so, we will assume that there are necessarily some risks involved, but that these are minimized.

## Necessary Conditions For Awareness of Death Through Sport

In the following analysis of danger sports we will concentrate on the conditions leading to an inevitable awareness of the possibility of death. We will not be concerned with offering a rationale for why people climb. We will not make the claim that people climb to gain an authentic understanding of mortality, but rather that this understanding is inevitable given three certain conditions. That is, people climb for a variety of reasons, but if the following situations concur then they must necessarily appreciate what it means to be (given the phenomenological account of death). In this respect, sport parachuting is 'dangerous' for two

reasons: (1) It is *possible* that both parachutes might not open, and (2) it is *possible* that the landing could cause injury. In both cases the consequences can be severe. In (1) you would be unlikely to survive, although it has been known. Such an analysis indicates a two dimensional structure of danger.

*Condition 1: The Sport Must Be Inherently Dangerous*

We can objectively assess the situations in a sport where it is possible for an 'accident' to occur and then judge the consequences of such an occurrence. In sport parachuting, there are two distinct situations and both can have grave consequences. Any sport, then, can be seen to be dangerous, but more importantly can reveal the possibility of being able-to-die, if (and I suggest *only* if) in its very nature it is foreseen to contain situations that are dangerous. The qualifying statement "in its very nature it is foreseen" exempts sports where death is certainly possible but occurs in an unfortunate accident. For instance, players have died on the football field, in a marathon race, and on the rugby pitch, but the possibility of death is not inherent in the nature of the sport itself.[30] Even though the two dimensional approach above can be used to suggest, in a fashion of 'ideal' types, that some sports are more dangerous than others, this is not a necessary distinction here. The comparison could be presented, as shown, in Figure 1 (see following page). But in terms of realising that I am going-to-die, any activity that is dangerous can provide such a realisation.

Heidegger never mentions that we need to deliberately put ourselves in danger to arrive at an authentic meaning of life. That claim, admittedly used in a slightly different way, belongs to Nietzsche,

> . . . the secret of the greatest fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment of existence is: to *live dangerously*. Build your cities under Vesuvius. Send your ships into unchartered seas. Live at war with you peers and yourselves. Be robbers and conquerors, as long as you cannot be rulers and owners, you lovers of knowledge.[31]

Nietzsche's thoughts on death can be seen as similar to Heidegger's in certain respects. Nietzsche rejects the Christian view of death, that the tragedy of life is overcome by

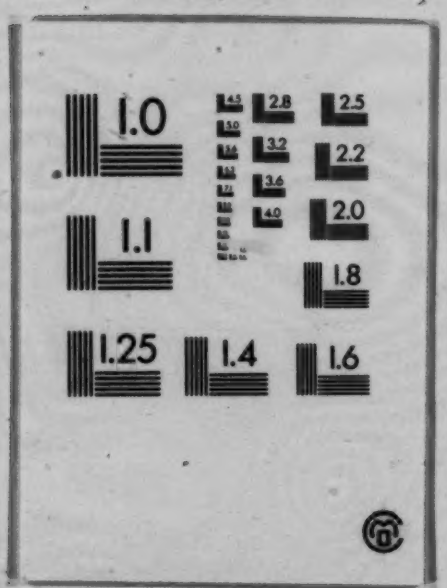
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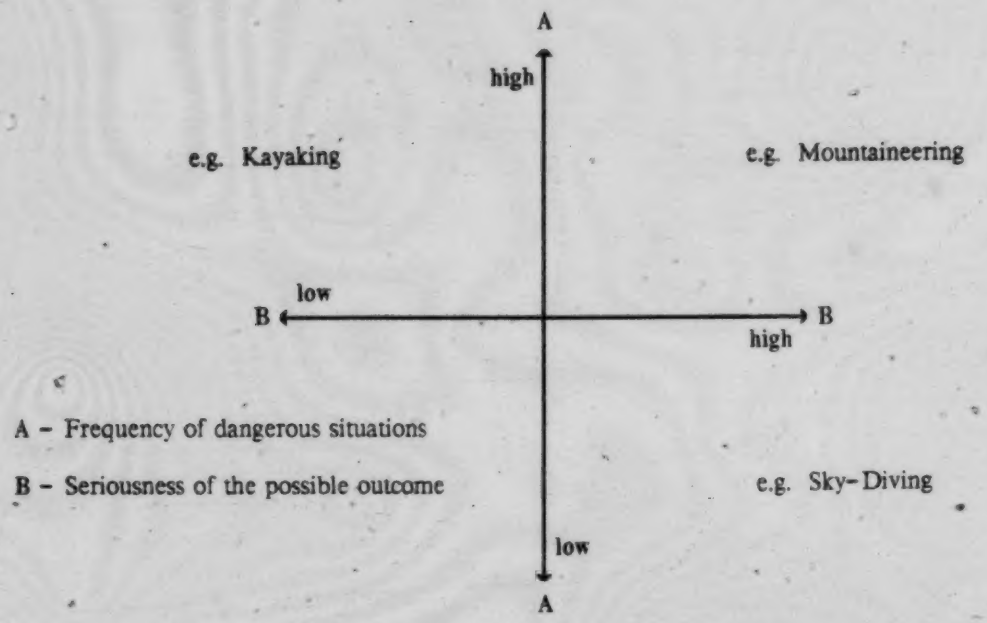
*Figure 1 - Two Dimensions of Danger*




the resurrection and transformation into another mode of existence. He asserts that the belief in immortality, "has so far been the most greatest, most malignant, attempt to assassinate *noble* humanity."[32] Mortality, in his view, is the very path into the centre of *this* life. It must be embraced in order to embrace life itself. Mountaineers, and the like, are "philosophers of death" because they *"live dangerously"*. This is where Nietzsche differs, in one respect, from Heidegger. We are not only mortal by 'definition', but also by 'demonstration'. Mortality implies that one *can* die. Yet mortality is meaningful only when we live life in such a way to make that death seem possible. In other words, that possibility is distanced by avoiding danger. Nietzsche's spokesman, Zarathustra, exclaims, "My death I praise to you, the free death which comes to me because *I* want it."[33]

This should not be read as a desire for the actuality of death. Nietzsche is not counselling the Stoic preference for suicide, but condemning the attitude that life constitutes

danger so we should seek security in a longing for survival. We must realise our finitude and vulnerability in order to realise the meaning of *this* life. To choose life is to choose a tragic death. Zarathustra wants his *own* death to give meaning to his *own* life. He does not want death to take him from behind, unaware. He accepts the importance of being-able-to-die.

Death then, reveals life as a process of *becoming*, of Heideggerian *possibilities*, of Sartrean *essence*. The tragedy of life's finitude reveals the "eternal joy of becoming."[34] The poetic charm of Sir Francis Younghusband's account of the 1924 Everest expedition expresses just such an emotion,

> One of the great mysteries of existence is that what is most awful and terrible does not deter man but draws him to it to his temporary disaster, perhaps, but in the end to an intensity of joy which without the risk he could never have experienced.[35]

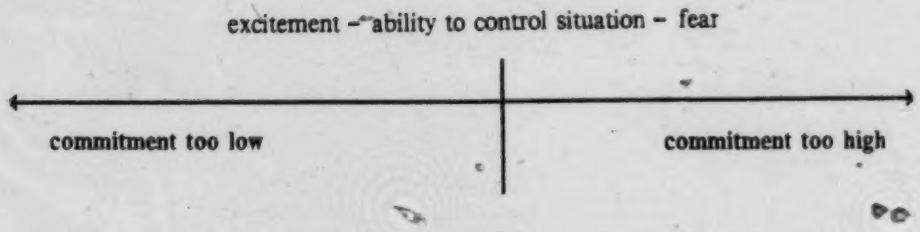
Mountaineering provides just such an awareness of our mortality through being exposed to danger. A phenomenological analysis of one's experiences in many situations will reveal this. Risk does not need to be involved. Leaping from Adam to Eve on the summit of Tryfan in North Wales[36], scrambling up an easy but extremely exposed ridge in the Cuillins of Skye, soloing a straightforward but easy snow gulley in one of the Cairngorm's northern corries, or rappelling down a climb, all demand the recognition, "*If* I fall, then I am (possibly) going-to-die." And such experiences are as accessable to the weekend mountaineer as they are to the Himalayan super-climber. Such accessability does, however, depend on commitment.

*Condition 2: Commitment to Challenge*

The climber that refuses to solo the easy approach slopes on an Alpine route, or ropes up on an easy but exposed rock route, eliminates the danger by protecting themself. The very possibility of death is removed. Awareness of ceasing-to-be requires self-assertion and commitment to the acceptance of danger. But, it can be seen that danger becomes risk when that commitment takes one to the limit of one's control. Remaining in control provides arousal and excitement. It also allows an authentic understanding of death. Loss of control leads to fear and

the inauthentic notion of death's actuality.

*Figure 2 - Commitment and Control*




The existential to-be-going-to-die means the awareness of one's ability not-to-be. This can be achieved by encountering danger, especially in mountaineering. As we have seen, the important consideration is the possibility of ceasing-to-be rather than the actuality. We live in the realm of possibilities, and it is in that realm that authentic existence is realised. We are free to determine the meaning of our own life. Sartre claims,

> To be finite, in fact, is to choose oneself – that is, to make known to oneself what one is by projecting oneself toward one possible to the exclusion of others. The very act of freedom is therefore the assumption and creation of finitude. If I make myself, I make myself finite and hence my life is unique.[37]

An important point is the freedom to choose. It is not the looking back upon existence as a simple chronicling of events that establishes the meaning of one's life. Possibility does not need to become actuality to achieve meaning. This implies that in death itself, life is realised, which is impossible. The importance of possibility is the freedom it offers. That is, the existential significance is not the choice (actuality) but the choosing (possibility). The last important characteristic of the mountaineer, to be a "philosopher of death", is the assumption of such freedom and responsibility. We must be conscious of our deliberate choice in facing danger.

With respect to our earlier division into the two paradigms of risk and danger, this element of conscious awareness means that we can further subdivide 'danger' situations into ones where the participant is aware and ones where he or she is not. Let us call the first of these two, situations of type C.A.D. (Consciously Aware of Danger). These situations meet the following criteria:

[1] If certain antecedent conditions ('A') are fulfilled then the consequence of death ('D') will probably not follow; and if these conditions are fulfilled, then, the situation becomes one of 'risk' and, 'D' probably will follow. (This was our main distinction earlier between risk and danger).

[2] Whether 'A' is fulfilled depends solely upon the conscious decisions and acts of the agent. (This disallows the accidental fulfillment of these conditions or their fulfillment by another, if the participant is to be authentically aware of the possibility of death).

[3] The participant is fully aware of the connection between 'A' and 'D' and is thus conscious that whether he or she lives or dies in the situation depends entirely upon his or her decisions and acts.* In this way, Alvarez sees mountaineering as an opportunity to effect such responsibility,

> Within the edgy terms they set up the risk sports provide an area in which you must take complete responsibility for your own life; that is, they provide precisely the occasions for choice and responsibilty that never quite arrive in clear recognisable form in the routine world . . . the element of risk can turn a weekend hobby into a small scale model for living, a life within a life.[11]

For mountaineering to offer such situations of responsibility, that are related to an awareness of life, there must be an assertion of choice. There has to be a desire to choose one course of action over another. Responsibility is manifested in the act of choosing. It is necessary to have alternatives. If there were no alternate possibilities there could be no choice. By excluding other possibilities in favour of just one we create finitude. Nietzsche envisages such creativity as 'will',

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* I am indebted to Dave Martens in the philosphy department at the University of Alberta for several suggestions regarding my distinction between risk, danger and conscious awareness of danger.

and the assertion of such 'will' is power. The very essence of life is the "will-to-power": "The will-to-power can manifest itself only against resistances, therefore it seeks that which resists it."[39] For Nietzsche, responsibility is assertive: not a matter of having choice forced upon us, but seeking choices. Accepting danger provides this opposition of choices, and it is only this opposition that makes it possible for us to be unique individuals. One opposition is the will to relinquish life. In Maurice Herzog's struggle to live when descending from the summit of Annapurna, the will of the Other momentarily overcome the will to-be, "Death clutched at me and I gave myself up".[40] Paul Nunn's statement is better seen in relation to the will to overcome the obstacles, rather than let the Other will defeat it. Responsibility finds its greatest realisation, not in the elimination of opposition to life by reducing the danger of Otherness, but in seeking power through the overcoming of ceasing-to-be by the will to-be-able-to-be. Zarathustra proclaims,

> Where I found a living creature, there I found the will to power; and even in the will of the servant I found the will to be master.
> The will of the weaker persuades it to serve the stronger, its will wants to be master over those weaker still: this delight alone it is unwilling to forego.
> And as the lesser surrenders to the greater, that it may have delight and power over the least of all, so the greatest, too, surrenders and for the sake of power stakes - life.
> The devotion of the greatest is to encounter risk and danger and play dice for death.
> . . . And life itself told me this secret: "Behold," it said, "I am that *which must overcome itself again and again.*"[41]

Nietzsche's "will-to-power" is comparable to Hegel's dialectic of mastery-slavery. We continually desire to assert our will. Such assertion requires its dialectic, submission. In circumstances where the will is directed against a contradictory will within oneself, one must accept the responsibility of choice. As Sartre claims, we make ourselves by the exclusion of one possibility in the acceptance of another. This self-assertion is our 'will'. Jim Collins has felt the desire to encounter this contradictory will within ourselves,

> Have you ever got the desire when you were in the middle of a climb, soloing, to just jump? I got this incredible urge when I was in the middle of *Hair City* (a 5.9 in Eldorado) to just jump. I mean you're up there defying

> death, and its really neat, and I thought, wouldn't that be the ultimate test of what you could survive, to just jump off something?[42]

Duncan Ferguson relates a similar experience,

> I had just done the *West Face of the Bastille* (a 5.9+) and I was sitting on the ledge at the top. I realised that, ultimately, the next step would be to fall off something. First I'd soloed routes I'd done, then routes I hadn't done, then new routes. If I could have hopped off without hurting myself, I would have. You're playing so close to the line, and the line is falling off. It's like a kid brother. It's always there.[43]

Someone or something is not simply powerful, but only powerful in relation to someone or something else. Nietzsche shows that our consciousness is a free choice, the will-to-power over the opposition to life.

*Condition 3: Encountering the Elemental*

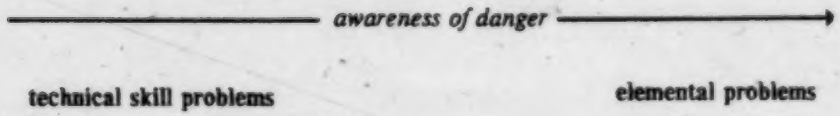
The opposition in mountaineering is the elemental, or at least provided by the elemental. The overcoming of danger is always the defiance of the forces of nature: gravity, storm, avalanche, and cold.

In this respect, certain danger sports can be seen as having two tendencies. One is towards the technical aspect of overcoming problems, one is towards the unison of the body with the elemental. For instance, some climbers may be so concerned with the skill aspect of overcoming technical problems that they are unconcerned with whether the problem exists 7000 metres up Everest or on a boulder in the middle of a field. The setting is only relevent in its relation to the difficulties of the climb. That is, a long route in Yosemite Valley is not sought for the thrill of exposure, which is incidental, but for the sustained and continued difficulty and challenge of overcoming a technical problem. Likewise, a kayakist may never venture outside of slalom competition, prefering the challenge of overcoming the opposition to the alotted course. A hang-glider pilot might concern themself with attempting to gain as much height as possible, staying aloft for as long as possible, or travelling as far as possible in one flight.

Such tendencies do not dismiss the tendency to encounter the elemental for its own

sake. In contrast others choose the unknown: climbing Everest in winter, kayaking the Stikine river in British Columbia, hang-gliding off Mt. McKinley, or skiing down the North Face of Mt. Robson. Obviously, the two aspects are strongly related and cannot be divorced, but one necessarily predominates.

*Figure 3 - Technical and Elemental Tendencies*




The elemental provides the greater danger, and thus the greater existential awareness and will-to-power. It means that the final opposition to the motivation of mountaineers as "philosophers of death" does not exhaust *all* climbers. This is the view exemplified by Czikszentmihaly to show how some climbers might react to the 'elemental',

> Climbing consists in overcoming the problems posed by a more or less vertical slab of stone. The entire purpose of climbing is to do this as well as possible. Everything that is not essential to this pursuit is in fact detrimental to it, since maximum performance can be achieved only through maximum concentration. The climber who looks at the clouds or thinks in iambic pentameters is a fake. Any tourist on a ski lift can get the same experience.[44]

Any tourist on a chair lift may see the same view, but they will not have had the same experience. They will not have had the opportunity to encounter danger, assert their will, choose their own possibilities, and take charge of their responsibility.

Clearly, not all mountaineers are "philosophers of death". But if they do seek sports that are dangerous and present the possibility of death (Figure 1), and they commit themselves to

accepting that possibility (Figure 2), and choose to face these dangers by encountering the elements (Figure 3), then they must be made aware of our uttermost potentiality: being able not-to-be. If they can face up to the consequences of that realisation in terms of its meaning for their lives, then, "philosophers of death" they are.

But what of failure? What of ceasing-to-be? Is there no other way to reach an authentic awareness of existence without risking the actuality of death? Yes, of course there is, but where is the "will-to-power" there? In the posthumous book of Giovanni Gervasutti's life, published after he was killed on the Gervasutti Pillar of Mont Blanc de Tacul when rappelling, Gabriel Boccolatte makes the profound judgement, "Dare all and you will be kin to the Gods." If this is our choice in life then it is worth the risk if it gives life its meaning. Holderlin's poem, *Nur einen Sommer*, sums up such a wish,

> A single summer grant me, great powers, and
> A single autumn for fully ripened song
> That, sated with the sweetness of my
> Playing, my heart may more willingly die.
> The soul that, living, did not attain its divine
> Right cannot repose in the nether world.
> But once what I am bent on, what is
> Holy, my poetry, is accomplished,
> Be welcome then, stillness of the shadows' world.
> I shall be satisfied though my lyre will not
> Accompany me down there. Once I
> Lived like the gods, and more is not needed.[45]

We must all seek to satisfy our souls, by accomplishing the divine right of choosing what we are "bent on" and fulfilling our will. One such mountaineer who has taken this responsibility and must surely lay claim to be a "philosopher of death" is Warren Harding, who once said of his girlfriend of the time, "Beryl, . . . knows it's perfectly possible that I might be killed climbing, but she also knows it's what gives me life."

## VI. WHAT IS A PERSON?

The problems surrounding the meaning of life, immortality and death, themselves present further problems. For instance, we sometimes consider that death is not simply bad because it brings to an end the animal organism, but that it is also equivalent to the destruction of the person. Many people would not consider it a misfortune to 'lose' their body if 'they' still continued on to heaven, as disembodied beings or 'souls'.[1] Similarly, a body might be kept alive on a life support system but the 'person' is dead.

It is not that our bodies contain something else, which itself corresponds to what it is to be a person. Yet, being a person or a self is more than just the sum total of our body parts. So, quite incorrectly, tombstones refer to dead bodies as people. "Here lies John Smith" implies that Smith is lying in the coffin reflecting on no longer being alive. It is for this reason that reincarnation is such a meaningless idea, particularly as advocated by some of the Eastern religions. The belief that 'you' will return in another form to live another life is obviously false. If there is any connection whatsoever between 'me' in this life and 'me' in another life then, it can only be if I can refer to both lives.[2] Suppose we are told that an irreligious life will lead to us being reincarnated as a lower life form (let's say, a frog). Such a prospect means nothing at all to 'me' unless in that next life I can hop around thinking, "Well, I must have really messed up last time: to be reduced from a bank manager to this".

This brings to our attention one aspect of the problem of personal identity: what does it mean to be an 'I' or a 'me', to have the capacity for self reference. Consider, for example, Alice in Wonderland's problems of personal identity,

> "Who are you?" said the Caterpillar.
> This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation. Alice replied,

> rather shyly, "I – I hardly know, sir, just at present – at least I know who I *was* when I got up this morning, but I think I must have changed several times since then."
> "What do you mean by that?" said the Caterpillar sternly. "Explain yourself."
> "I can't explain *myself,* I'm afraid, sir," said Alice, "because I'm not myself, you see."
> "I don't see," said the Caterpillar.
> "I'm afraid I can't put it more clearly," Alice replied very politely, "for I can't understand it myself to begin with; and being so many different sizes in a day is very confusing."
> "It isn't," said the Caterpillar.
> "Well, perhaps you haven't found it so yet," said Alice; "but when you have to turn into a chrysalis – you will some day, you know – and then after that into a butterfly, I should think you'll feel a little queer, won't you?"
> "Not a bit," said the Caterpillar.
> "Well, perhaps your feelings may be different," said Alice; "all I know is, it would feel very queer to *me.*"
> *"You,"* said the Caterpillar contemptuously. "Who are *you?"*
> Which brought them back again to the beginning of the conversation.[3]

Alice is undoubtedly a 'person'. Her whole problem rests on the fact that she recognizes this but doubts she is the same person as before her drastic bodily changes. Alice is prompted into her metaphysical speculation by committing a *fallacy of accent:* she misplaces the emphasis of the Caterpillar's question. He is making a straightforward request for identification, to which a reply would be a statement of name, or another form of self description. Having committed this fallacy, Alice proceeds to commit it again. The Caterpillar asks her to explain what she is talking about, which she interprets instead as a request for self-analysis. Alice's difficulties are compounded by her insistance that the 'I' which is doing the referring is not really herself, which she associates with 'Alice'. She attributes the identity of 'Alice' with certain physical states and not with her continuing self-reflexive capacity. This leads her to point out that the Caterpillar will have the same problems when he changes into a chrysalis and then a butterfly. If the Caterpillar associates himself, as Alice does, with his body then how could 'he' be the same when he changes his bodily form so drastically?

Despite Alice's protests, she is certainly the same person. She satisfies most of the criteria that have been suggested as necessary for constituting a personal identity: she remembers all the things that have happened to her, she is capable of identifying a unity (the self reflexive

'I') that endures throughout change (and is aware of its endurance and the changes), and she is always aware when something is happening to her. Personal identity might be summarized as:

> Sameness of 'self' (ego, subject, memory, 'I', awareness, consciousness). The awareness of being the same conscious unity at different times and places.
>
> The identification of a persisting or enduring unity of activity (personality, individuality, character) throughout change of activity or behaviour.

The interesting things about Alice's difficulties are the reasons why she feels she is no longer the same self-identifying individual. If we examine these problems of identity, we will find that we often have an unusual view of what it is to be a person.

**The Game, the Player and the Person**

In my undergraduate years, my friends and I would often play long and complicated board games that are especially designed to take place over several days. These often involved a great deal of strategy and diplomacy, interacting with the other players away from the board as well as when specific moves were being made. Invariably, one of the players would lose interest, or have other commitments, and would have to leave the game. But this was never a problem: there were always other friends watching who gladly stepped in to take the previous player's place. The game would not stop unless all the players, at the same time, had to withdraw.

Suppose that six of us begin the game and play for a day or so, before one player has to drop out. Fortunately, his or her place is taken and the game continues. A while later, a second player withdraws, but their part in the game is also taken over by somebody else. After a few more evenings of planning and diplomacy, a third player decides that too much time is being spent playing and not enough studying: they too leave the game to have their place taken for them. This goes on as the fourth and fifth 'original' players drop out and two more newcomers step in. Eventually, still prior to the continuation of the game, the last remaining 'original' player

withdraws. The game continues until, at long last, it is finished.

At the conclusion of the game, the participants are very different than they were at the beginning. However, I think we would readily admit that the game itself remains the same. There is an unbroken continuation of it being played, albeit by changing players. The pieces are the same, the developing conflicts and 'showdowns' are the same and the progress of the game can be clearly seen from start to finish. In many ways, this is similar to Alice's situation. She is aware of her gross bodily changes and the continuity of an 'I' throughout these changes. She simply denies that this 'I' is really her. This is because she associates herself, 'Alice', with a definite self-description: she is a little girl of a certain height, weight, etc. The following example makes our problem slightly harder.[3]

A small neighbourhood puts together a baseball team and begins to play some friendly games against other local sides. At first, they are purely interested in the social aspects and fun of the casual games, but after some success they join a local bush league and establish an identity for themselves as the '76th Avenue Sloggers'. Eventually the season gets underway, and they begin to play regularly. As the season progresses some of the players leave and are replaced by newcomers. One by one, all the originals disappear. By the end of the season, the players on the team are different from the ones who began. The team has remained the '76th Avenue Sloggers' and has played a full, continuous season in the league. This example seems to be very similar to our previous one. If they are the same, then we would conclude that despite the differences, the 'Sluggers' has remained the same team.

At the start of the next season, the captain re-applies to the league to play again, but is told that there is already a team in the league called the '76th Avenue Sloggers' and that there is no more room. It seems that the original players stayed together as they left the league and formed a new team. By virtue of being the founders of the team and its identity (they were the only players on the team from 76th Avenue), they claim to be *the* '76th Avenue Sloggers'. Surely only one of them can be the actual team and the other a copy. Both have perfectly good claims to the title. But which team is the *real* one?

We could try to resolve the situation by an analogy between the 'team' (its identity) with the players (its body) in the same way that we can consider the relationship between the person and the body. This might lead us to suggest that despite the bodily changes, there was a continuation of an identity (the unity of activity of the team in the league). Even though the original body parts have been put back together, they do not constitute the identity of the team. This is quite compatable with our normal notion of a 'person'. A person can have a transplant or go through other bodily changes, but we do not doubt that they are the same person. The process of physical maturation and adolescence involves many changes that do not lead us to doubt the continuity of the person, unless we also associate the person from an external viewpoint as a certain personality or character. Then, an objective view of the person might conflict with the subjective view.

*The Player*

Harry and Elizabeth have just been divorced. The judge granted the dissolution of the marriage on the grounds of irreconcilable differences. Harry claimed throughout the proceedings that Elizabeth was, "just not the same person anymore". It all began when Elizabeth took up jogging.

Elizabeth had been overweight since she had given birth to their children 18 and 21 years ago. After being tied down to the house with child-rearing and housework, she found it difficult to get back into the workforce. Harry did not exactly help. He preferred his wife to stay at home for when the children got back from school, and to keep the place neat and tidy so that they could relax on the weekends. She promised herself that she would be more physically and socially active after the children had gone off to university. When that time came, she joined a Y.W.C.A. fitness program and began to jog.

Slowly but surely, Elizabeth added the miles to her daily runs and reduced the inches from her waistline. She kept up her strict regimen of dieting and exercise well beyond the duration of the program. But in addition, she also made a great many new friends through the Y.W.C.A. and her fitness classes. Most of her daytimes were spent socializing with her new

acquaintances and then running for a couple of hours before supper. As the duration of her training periods grew, supper was eaten later and later. Harry began to see his wife very little. She never lazed around in bed on a Sunday morning anymore and used the weekend to put in some extra long runs – Elizabeth had decided to enter the New York Marathon.

By now, she was begining to look like a 'new' woman. Her body was lighter, trimmer and healthier looking than it had been for many years. But more significantly, her personality was changing rapidly. She was no longer tired and irritable in the evenings, but more often comfortably ready for a good deep sleep. Her tastes in food changed: out went the fats and carbohydrates. Her dress sense and confidence in her appearance rose tremendously: she bought a bikini for the first time in 16 years. She cancelled her subscription for 'Family Circle' and 'Homemaker' and brought home 'Cosmopolitan' and 'Vogue'. However, more important than all of these changes was her attitude to Harry. She began to grow more impatient with his demands and lack of effort, energy, and enthusiasm: eventually she left him.

We would not doubt that Elizabeth was a different character, personality or individual than she was some years ago. We all change our characters in many ways over the years, but hers had been a rapid and major change. Yet, we would still want to say that Elizabeth is the same 'person', even though she is also clearly different. This might not present a difficulty as far as Elizabeth's conception of herself is concerned, but Harry certainly believed her not to be the same 'person' that he married. He once confided in his business partner, "I don't know what's happened to the wife I know, but I feel as if I'm sleeping with a stranger – I don't even recognize her anymore".

*The Person*

Personology (now discounted by most psychologists) is the attribution of a number of personality traits to the identity of the individual. That is, we are the sum total of our objectively assessable and measurable characteristics. This is one way in which we still commonly view a person. This would account for one sense in which Harry might be correct in claiming that Elizabeth was not the same 'person'. Alice had the same problems when she began

her traumatic changes, "But if I'm not the same, the next question is, Who in the world am I? Ah, *that's* the great puzzle".

Alice begins by deciding what characteristics she now has, and goes on to decide who she knows that has the same characteristics, on the assumption that she must be that person,

> "I'm sure I'm not Ada," she said, "for her hair goes in such long ringlets, and mine doesn't go in ringlets at all; and I'm sure I can't be Mabel, for I know all sorts of things, and she, oh, she knows such a very little. Besides, *she's* she, and *I'm* I, and – oh dear, how puzzling it all is.[6]

Once again, Alice gets it right – 'she' is she. However, she ignores her own advice and goes on trying to identify who she could be out of the people she knows. She fails to recount her multiplication tables and concludes that she must be Mabel: they both have an attribute in common – ignorance.

The player is more than just another body on the field, with a set of personality traits and characteristics. Players are also 'persons' in the same way that we are as self-reflexive beings. That is, despite any outward bodily changes or differences in personality, a 'person' has a consciousness of having been the same thing previously in this or that state. This is an important aspect of being a 'person' from both the point of view of identity and in any idea of responsibililty for our actions. Danto states,

> That a person is distinct from a (mere) thing, and that any human being, insofar as he is a person, is in consequence of this status to to be treated in a special manner, are two of the main logical features of this concept.[7]

Self-awareness is a fundamental consideration in personhood. 'Persons' might be part of material processes, but they are still distinct from the (mere) material body. Yet, it is the material body that remains what is customarily observed by other persons. If we are to treat others in a genuine way as other 'persons' we must be able to ascribe to them the same capacities for selfhood that we have ourselves.

Strawson suggests that this is possible by differentiating between those terms which are applicable to material bodies (and obviously to persons) and those terms which are applicable

to persons only.[8] He labels these two classes of terms, *M*-predicates and *P*-predicates, respectively. Thus, an *M*-predicate such as 'is overweight' is ascribable to the person *and* the material body. But a *P*-predicate, such as 'is unhappy' cannot be said of a material body but only of a person. This implies that our ability to identify and reidentify an individual based on an exhaustive association of *M*-predicates with that individual will not be enough to identify that individual as the same person. Similarly, we cannot deny the identity of the person by denying that they any longer correspond to a set of *M*-predicates (as in Harry's denial that Elizabeth was the same person). Contrary to what the personologist, Harry, and Alice would believe, *P*-predicates are indefinable in terms of, and not reducible to, a set of *M*-predicates. A person can only be identifiable when it is possible for us to ascribe to them at least one *P*-predicate.

This presents less of a problem for me in identifying myself as a person, than it does in identifying another. Since Descartes, we have accepted that the very process of self-reflection is enough to accept that 'I' am a person. However, my criterion for ascibing the same *P*-predicate to another person cannot be the same, in the sense that I cannot be aware of the other person's experiencing this state: Harry cannot feel Elizabeth's happiness or contentment. A traditional method of circumventing this problem is the 'Berkelean' one of analogy: that the existence and nature of self-awareness in others is to be inferred by analogy from their outward resemblance in appearance and behaviour to oneself. Alice at first makes this analogy with the Caterpillar, "when you have to turn into a chrysalis . . . I should think you'll feel a little queer, won't you?" She is, of course, attributing the Caterpillar with the same capacities as herself, but finally concedes that because of the physical differences there are probably mental differences as well, "Well, perhaps your feelings may be different".[9]

In Strawson's view, we cannot know the use of a *P*-predicate in terms of ascibing it to ourselves, unless we know how to acribe it to others. This notion of attribution to others of the same propensities as we would attribute to ourselves is a fundamental one in most agent-centred criticisms of consequentialist ethics. For instance, if we use people as means to an end (say in the production of the greatest happiness), we are denying them the same capacities

that we would give to ourselves. This, I believe, is what Kant means when he stipulates that respect is an attitude that we can only apply to persons. In a sense, to deny them this respect, is to deny them as sentient beings.

In sport we deny people this respect when we treat them as objects preventing us from achieving our desired goals. If we overtly break the rules for our own benefit, we are, in effect, failing to recognize our opponents as persons. The concept of fairness implies the joint undertaking of free persons, with no authority over each other, to engage in an activity together. Breaking the rules might not be a direct act against an individual, but it is a failure to recognize the others in the game as free-agents, like oneself, attempting to fulfill their desires in a joint activity.[10]

## VII. THE POSSIBILITY OF ETHICAL KNOWLEDGE

Is there such a thing as 'value' that exists in the world, whereupon, statements concerning what is 'good', what is the 'right' way to act, and what we 'ought' to do can be said to make true or false assertions? In short, is ethical knowledge possible? This is basically an ontological question concerning the existence of 'value' as a quality or property that an object, act or person can possess. It is not entirely necessary that an ethical theory must account for morality in such a way, but it is a starting point for many attempts at defining what we mean by 'good' or 'right'.

### The Delimitation of an Ethical Problem in Sport

The french novelist and philosopher Albert Camus claimed it was from sport that he gained all his knowledge of ethics.[1] Sport can be used for moral education in many respects. However, the authoritarian nature of institutionalized sport creates several problems with respect to this claim. It can be contended that sport is a socializing agent rather than a moral educator.[2] This furnishes us with one view of moral language. That is, to the extent that ethical statements make true claims, they are statements of sociological or psychological facts.[3] For example, if "I ought to obey the rules of the game" simply says that obeying the rules is required in order to conform to generally accepted standards, then this is no more than a statement of sociological fact. Similarly, it is a statement of psychological fact if the utterance implies that I feel compelled to act this way. We can, thus, consider some sports as being more likely to socialize the participants into an adherence to rules and conventions, than to 'educate' them in moral principles. This implies that there is a third kind of 'ought' statement, such that it

makes a moral or value judgement. This third meaning of the expression 'ought' can be illustrated by the seemingly equivocal statement: "I feel that I ought to let my disabled and atrophying father take his own life but *ought* I to let him?" The latter use of the word 'ought' is an appeal for moral justification for the first use of the word 'ought' (the statement of psychological fact). As such, it raises the question of whether euthenasia (or any other act) can be objectively assessed as 'right' or 'wrong'.

We often fail to differentiate between these kinds of 'ought' statements because our value judgements tend to coincide with our acceptance of convention and also our feelings. This does not eliminate the existence of the value judgement. It will serve our purposes better if we look at sports where there is little or no 'authority', and try to uncover whether there is any basis for establishing the possibility of ethical knowledge. There are many sports where the ethics of fair play are not directly related to the rules of the game and, consequently, not adjudicated by an umpire, referee or governing body. Such sports are of more interest to us here because the player that asks the question, "Why should I not play however I want to?" cannot be answered by saying, "If you do not play how the rules dictate you will be removed from the game". Let us then delimit this discussion to situations where we cannot immediately determine what the 'right' course of action is by an appeal to the law. In these cases there is no written law and at most convention.

Mountaineering is just such a sport; where climbers can choose to make the climb easier or harder by using more or less 'aids'. Yet, despite this freedom, ethical discussions are prominent in climbing circles. For example, the trend in most areas is to climb "free" (that is, without the use of direct artificial aids). This has arisen for several reasons; (1) as standards have improved, old climbs that needed to be 'aided' have been climbed 'unaided'. To use aid on such a climb would now be considered unnecessary. More importantly, it is considered unethical to use aid on a new climb, for the sake of a first ascent, if the climb is of a standard that could have been done "free"; and (2) some aids that are attached to the rock significantly alter and deface the climb for subsequent climbers. Thus, as in most considerations of moral behaviour,

discussions on the ethics of climbing revolve around how we 'ought' to act in consideration of others and with regard to the acts themselves.

Two present arguments in the mountaineering world have been concerned with the latter of these considerations. As standards of free-climbing have escalated, climbers have had to face smaller 'holds', steeper climbs and more dangerous situations. They are more dangerous because the climber's perch is more tenuous and requires greater strength and skill to protect himself or herself by the normal methods of attachment to the rock. For some, the danger aspect is accidental to what climbing is all about. To others, improvements in standards should not come at the expense of removing important elements of the game. Devices called "friends" have been developed that are quick and easy to use. These have the capacity to eliminate the possibility of a long fall and allow the climber to concentrate on the skill aspects of climbing. Indeed, the climber can safely fall off over and over again with little risk, in trying to overcome a difficult section. Others have suggested that these "friends" effectively reduce 'leading' a climb to 'seconding' because the climber can reach above him or her and protect a difficult move before actually making it. Thus, "friends" can be considered as 'aids'.

The second argument concerns the use of 'chalk' on the fingers to increase grip through better friction. Is this also an 'aid'? A further consideration is the defacing of the climb by leaving chalk marks on all the holds. The climb loses much of its character for the following climbers if they can see all the 'moves'. These are considered 'ethical' problems because they are concerned with how we should climb and notions of fair play (albeit not 'fair play' in the usual context of direct competition with an opponent). We will use these problems to discuss the meta-ethical question of whether actions are in any way objectively 'right' or 'wrong', 'good' or 'bad'.[4]

*The Untenability of Skepticism*

The skeptic in our argument is the climber who refuses to accept that there are any grounds for attributing value to a particular action that he or she may undertake when climbing. Thus, the question of whether it is 'right' or 'wrong' to use artificial aids cannot be answered by

an appeal to morality. We must differentiate between the skeptic and the subjectivist in this instance. The latter may well deny the existence of a property or quality that exists in the act itself, but could still choose to accept value by making 'valuing' dependent on ourselves. Subsequently, we would be able to give things value if they adhere to our subjectively defined criteria. The skeptic, in contrast, is like the nihilist. Both deny any pronouncement of value, but the subjectivist at least admits that value judgments do make (but not 'assertions'), albeit that they are simply statements of sociological or psychological fact. In its extreme, nihilism denies that 'good', 'right', and 'ought' mean anything at all. The skeptic's position, with regard to the problems we have defined in mountaineering, is exemplified by the following quote from the obituary of Reinhard Karl,

> During his frequent visits to the USA and Britain, Reinhard made many friends from whom he learned new tricks of the trade. Though he was one of the people responsible for infiltrating the German climbing scene with radical foreign ethics, he was the last to adhere to them strictly himself. His purpose was to provoke the hardcores on both sides and to topple a few sacred cows. . . . [T]he endless discussions he helped spark off on ethics still rage in the alpine literature – ("Chalk? I'll smear your routes with honey and jam if I feel like it.")[3]

Let us assume that the skeptic is a reasonable person.[4] What this means is that the skeptic accepts all other aspects of the world that the moralist accepts but denies that there is such a thing as 'value'. Can the skeptic use a value-language in order to claim that denying value is just as 'good' as accepting it? In the case of the climber, can we say that using aids is equally as 'good' as not using them, if we have chosen not to accept that value exists?

It appears that we have two versions of the world, both claiming to be true. The only difference between these worlds is that one of them lacks value. The skeptic's world can be shown to be true by searching endlessly without ever finding this thing called value. The skeptic also finds that where value terms like 'right' and 'good' are used, the acts which these describe can be seen to be 'wrong' and 'bad' in different circumstances and cultures. Conversely, the moralist's world can be shown to be true using the realist's demonstration of describing a world without value. If this world would significantly differ as to be abnormal, then (so the argument

goes) value must be present in the world, regardless of whether we can identify its exact form. So, do we have two versions of the world that are equally good? Robert Nozick succinctly shows how we do not,

> The view that denies the existence of value cannot claim to be equally good, for it recognizes no notion of goodness according to which it is equal; however, it might claim to be "no worse", meaning thereby that there is no notion of "worse" according to which it ranks lower. In that case, neither does the other view rank lower than it and so on its own view, it (at best) ties. On the other hand, the view that affirms value is able to rank itself as better than the view that denies it. To be sure, the view that denies value claims to be true, but it cannot claim that it is better to be true, or that it is better to believe the truth.[7]

The skeptic might avoid this problem altogether by denying that value judgements make true claims about the world.[8] One position that develops from such a respite is *noncognitivism* (or sometimes, *nondescriptivism*). In its extreme, this position holds that value judgements are not capable of rational or objectively valid justification. For a proposition to be an assertion (and necessarily capable of being tested as true or false) it must be empirically verifiable or tautologous. In so far as value judgements cannot be thus tested, they are meaningless. However, the skeptic's principle of verification must face the same axe: is it itself verifiable or a tautology?

The skeptic, to be consistent, must be affectless. That is, he or she must stop valuing altogether. (This is only the case if we assume that granting the existence of value for one situation gives value its autonomy). The only recourse of the climber is to argue that 'right' and 'wrong', with regard to the use of aids, are concerned with correct and incorrect ways to perform an action. We can consider the correct way to tie a knot, or construct a model. Does 'good' correspond with a set of correct actions (or, alternatively, some other set of criteria)? The climber can argue that, since there are no laws stipulating the 'right' way to climb, the use of aids is totally up to the individual. This last position is coherent with some meta-ethical theories that try to show how value judgements do mean something. It is time to turn our attention to these theories and place the burden of proof on the moralist.

**Facts and Values**

With our discussion about artificial aids, there can be seen to be a gap between what are judgements of *fact* on the one hand and judgements of *value* on the other. It is a matter of fact that "friends" and chalk make the climb easier. It is a matter of fact that chalk alters the climb for others. Can we then make the connection between what *is* the case and what *ought* to be the case? This has become known as the is–ought question, or the fact–value question, and was first identified by the Scottish philosopher David Hume,

> In every statement of morality, which I have hitherto met with, I have always remark'd, that the author proceeds for some time in the ordinary way of reasoning, and established the being of a God, or makes observations concerning human affairs; when of a sudden I am surpris'd to find, that instead of the usual copulations of propositions, *is* and *is not*, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an *ought*, or *ought not*. This change is imperceptible; but is, however, of the last consequence. For as this *ought*, or *ought not*, expresses some new relation or affirmation, 'tis necessary that it shou'd be observ'd and explain'd; and at the same time that a reason should be given, for what seems altogether inconceivable, how this new relation can be a deduction from others, which are entirely different from it. But as authors do not commonly use this precaution, I shall presume to recommend it to the readers; and am persuaded, that this small attention wou'd subvert all the vulgar system of morality.'

We do appear to justify ethical statements by an appeal to facts. Thus, we say that using chalk is 'wrong' because it injures other climbers' enjoyment, or that a route is 'good' because it was climbed unaided. We are tacitly assuming the moral principle that injurious acts are 'wrong' and the value judgement that unaided climbs are 'good'. To avoid deriving value from fact alone we must justify these ethical or value judgements by reference to more basic premises. The question, then, is whether our most basic premises of what is 'good' or 'right' can be derived from factual judgements.

***Definist Theories***

One attempt to bridge this gap has been made by a school of philosophy generally

referred to as *naturalism*. The naturalist's view is that 'ought' can be *defined* in terms of 'is'. For example, if "We ought to do X" means "We are required by our peers to do X" then, from "It is a general consensus among the climbing world that we do not use unnecessary aids" it follows that we ought not to use aids. The simple idea behind naturalism is that if we can define what value words mean or refer to, we can determine how to justify them. Similarly then, if the word 'good' means "that which is desired by the majority of climbers" we can show that something *is* good by demonstrating empirically the fact of its desirability amongst the climbing world.

Definist theories have been in some way implicit in many ethical philosophies: particularly so in theology where (for example) 'right' can be defined as "commanded by God". However, what is commanded by God ceases to be a matter of empirical fact.[10]Naturalist tendencies can be seen in the ethical writings of Aristotle and Bentham.[11]Both define 'good' in terms of well-being and human happiness. Two contemporary philosophers who have proposed naturalist theories are R. B. Perry and F. C. Sharp.[12]

Perry begins by noting the connection between value terms such as 'good' and 'bad', and psychological states of love and hate, approval and disapproval, like and dislike,

> There are often terms of discourse, such as "good", "right", "duty", "responsibility", and "virtue", which are commonly recognized as having to do with morality, and to which a theory of morals must assign definite meanings.
> Two meanings have already been assigned to the term "good". In the most general sense, it means the character which anything derives from being an object of any positive interest: whatever is desired, liked, enjoyed, willed, or hoped for, is *thereby* good.[13]

The problem arises (and Perry is aware of it) when there are conflicts between favourable and unfavourable attitudes, or where opposite states of affairs are considered desirable by different people. This is the case where the climber has a favourable attitude to what is disliked by others: using chalk on a route. Perry addresses this problem by arguing that 'morality' provides a set of rules that attempts to bring such conflicts into harmony: "In a special sense, 'morally good' is the character imparted to objects by interests harmoniously organized."[14]The moral good, then, is one that achieves harmony when more than one person is affected by the interest.

Perry uses his definist account of the meaning of value judgements to propose a broad normative theory of morality that is closely related to Bentham's utilitarianism.[15]Consequently, he proposes such definitions as these:

> "good" means "being an object of favourable interest (desire)".
>
> "right" means "being conducive to harmonious happiness".[16]

Before the climber is forced to accept his or her actions as unethical and resort to asking "Why should we be moral?", there is one more difficulty that can be used to counter the naturalist. Let us suppose that the climber is in the minority and the smearing of chalk all over the climb will be unfavourable to more people than it is favourable. If "being conducive to harmonious happiness" means something similar to the principle of utility ('the greatest good for the greatest number'), in situations where there is a conflict of interest, then, the climber can legitimately concede to Perry's definition of 'right' and still ask, "But is it 'right'?"

*The Naturalistic Fallacy*

We have seen that Perry's thesis claims that value predicates relate to 'natural' properties of things. Thus, the justification of value terms can be elucidated by defining their meanings. Critics of this approach have labelled the identification of an ethical judgement with a factual one, "the naturalistic fallacy".[17]The "fallacy" has been demonstrated by showing how the definist's argument rests on a mistake, and this demonstration is quite straightforward. Let us say that the definitions of value terms mean that they have the property 'P'. In other words, "being an object of desire" or "being conducive to harmonious happiness" can be described by the relation "having the property P". These, seemingly acceptable, definitions leave it still significant to ask, "This has the property P, but is it 'good' (or 'right')?" If the definition was in fact correct, this question would be non-sensical because it would be equivalent to saying, "This has P, but does it have P?"

One way to understand the "open-question" strategy is to consider a correct definition. Let this be, "A bachelor is an unmarried man". Here, the two terms linked by the

definition have exactly the same meaning. Consequently, to say "I know John is unmarried, but is he a bachelor?" (equivalent to, "I know John is B, but is he B?"), is a closed question – because the meaning of the word 'bachelor' is *identical* to the meaning of the term 'unmarried man'. If the question had been phrased, "John behaves like an unmarried man, but is he a bachelor?" it is shown to be "open". Although John shows all the characteristics that we associate with an unmarried man, we can still (sensibly) ask whether he is unmarried because the characteristics are not identical with the real meaning of the term 'bachelor'. Thus, if we can ask an "open" question of the definition of 'good' or 'right' (as we undoubtedly can) then "having the property P" is not identical with being 'good' or 'right'.

This line of argument does not leave the definist without a reply (but it does stand as a conclusive argument). One alternative would be to say that, despite the inaccuracy of the definitions, it might still be desirable to accept them. This is to say that the definition is simply a *naturalistic* definition. Perry might argue that the "open question" argument does reveal that his particular definition can be doubted, but it is meant as a recommendation.

> Theory of value is in search of a preferred meaning. The problem is to define, that is, give a meaning to the term, either by selecting from its existing meanings, or by creating a new meaning.[18]

Asking an open question does not automatically mean that the answer will be, "Yes, this has P, but it is *not* 'good'."

We noted earlier that some form of definist theory can be found in Aristotle and Bentham. Bentham, and more particularly his successor John Stuart Mill, denied that their theories afford a strict logical proof. It may still be that there is a *non-logical* sense in which our basic value judgements can be grounded in the nature of things. Thus, the hedonists tried to justify the principle of utility by showing that basic human nature desires nothing but happiness or a means to happiness. This does not escape the problem of justification, it merely shifts the burden from the definition to the corresponding moral principle.[19]

We will not pursue the problems of naturalism further. Instead, it is more

informative to look at Moore's reasons for rejecting naturalism in favour of an alternative theory.

*Intuitionism*

The purpose behind Moore's "open question" argument is to show that value properties are distinct in kind from factual properties. That is, if the value term 'good' can be defined by a set of natural properties, then any sentence containing 'good' can be replaced by its defining formula without loss of meaning. Moore shows that this is not so. However, Moore still wants to maintain that 'good' is a property. So, when we say "X is good" we are still saying that "X has the property P". Contrary to the naturalists, this property is nonnatural. It is unobservable, untestable, unanalyzable and irreducible. Moore expresses this as follows,

> If I am asked "What is good?" my answer is that good is good, and that is the end of the matter. Or if I am asked "How is good to be defined?" my answer is that it cannot be defined, and that is all I have to say about it.[10]

Moore uses the examples of "yellow" and "horse" to show that 'good' is an unanalyzable property. We can give a definition of a horse because it has many different properties and qualities. A simple notion such as yellow cannot be thus defined. We can show how yellow light is produced or describe it in terms of wavelengths, but none of these *mean* the same as the colour yellow. 'Good' is a similar property. Because it is noncomplex it is not reducible to smaller units. Also, it cannot be defined in terms of another simple property in the form of, "Good = Desirable" or "Good = Pleasant" because these are not mutually translatable.

Intuitionism still retains the possibility of ethical knowledge. Value judgements can be true or false because subjects referred to as 'good' either do or do not have 'goodness' attributable to them. We cannot substantiate nonvaluative premises from which value terms are derived. The value terms are fundamental. Consequently, they must be 'intuited'. They are self-evident and not justified by empirical observation. The three important facets of intuitionism can be summarized as,

Basic terms in moral statements refer to nonnatural properties.

Nonnatural properties *are* objective (and moral statements are true or false).

The truth or falsehood of moral statements is self-evident or intuitive.

For persons not attracted by intuitionism there seem to be no explanations as to why it should be considered. Yet, this theory has been dominant at many stages in the history of philosophy. Indeed, intuition has played a major part in scientific breakthroughs and discoveries. It would be wrong to dismiss our intuitive faculty. Intuitionism is attractive for those who want to maintain objectivity and justifiability without recourse to naturalism.

Despite the feasibility of intuiting nonnatural properties, the serious problem for the intuitionist concerns *knowing* that something is right or good. Arguably, it is not enough to say that something is true and to believe it is true. There must be a method for justifying this belief if it is to count as knowledge. Presumably, intuition is such a method, but intuition seems to be indistinct from strongly held belief.

Ethical knowledge becomes desirable for arbitrating moral disagreements. Our original problem involves just such a need for justification of one course of action over another. If we accept this role of ethical theory then intuitionism provides no method of knowing moral truths. We must reject intuitionism, even if this is for none other than pragmatic reasons.

**Noncognitivism**

Have we been confusing truths about words with truths about things? In asking whether there is such a thing as value that exists in the world, the most natural response is to look for a property that is independent from the objects or acts that can be described in terms of this 'thing'. This led us to (what are termed) the *cognitivist* theories of naturalism and intuitionism that associate value judgements with property-ascribing statements. Both of these have much initial appeal and might be accepted despite their problems. Many philosophers have rejected them though, and concluded that moral assertions are neither true nor false, and consequently there is no moral knowledge. The theories that these people take up to explain the

use of moral language can all be identified as types of *noncognitivism*.

This is quite a general label, covering a wide range of theories. Nevertheless, most of these hold the common notion that moral language is in some way persuasive rather than referential: we are attempting to persuade people to choose one action over another, rather than referring to an inherent property. So, an expression such as "Using artificial aids is wrong" simply expresses the emotion, "Aids? Yah, boo" or the attitude, "I don't like using aids". Stated in their normative form, these expressions are used to persuade others to feel the same. Two of the most prominent forms of noncognitivism are the *emotive theory* and the *attitude theory*.

The 'emotive theory', established by A. J. Ayer[21], is the most extreme of these views. It denies any kind of rational or objectively valid form of justification for value judgements. They are simply expressions of 'emotions'. Emotivists admit to the persuasive aspects of the theory: that we constantly attempt to resolve conflicts by persuading others to accept our point of view. They simply claim that 'facts' cannot resolve these disputes. One comment about such a claim is that, ultimately, reasons must be given if a resolution is to be found. A justice system might stipulate that the enjoyment of the greatest number of climbers is better than one person's enjoyment causing greater unhappiness. Although this arbitration cannot be justified by an appeal to the facts, it inevitably serves the purpose of defining 'right' as (for example) "being conducive to harmonious happiness". To remain true to an emotivist theory one must accept unjustifiable normative principles or remain a moral skeptic.

The 'attitude theory' is less extreme than Ayer's. The view put forward by C. L. Stevenson is that value terms are seldom completely emotive.[22]They offer descriptions as well as emotions. For example, "It is wrong to use 'friends' as aids" has a descriptive meaning of "Using aids has the qualities or relations A, B, C" where, (A) is a notion of inequality with other climbers, (B) is the liability of defacing the climb, and (C) is the unnecessity of making the climb easier. Stevenson argues that this 'descriptive' meaning is *always* accompanied by a laudatory 'emotive' meaning which expresses the speaker's approval ('right') or disapproval ('wrong') of these qualities. This is still a noncognitivist theory in that our judgements are not true or false.

But Stevenson provides a role for reason or rational judgement in ethical disputes. The descriptive meaning of value judgements gives the appearance of factual justification because the facts can cause attitudes. By changing a climber's knowledge of the facts involved with using aids, we might alter his or her attitude. However, the attitudes themselves determine our fundamental moral principles and these cannot be justified by recourse to fact.

**The Function of Moral Language**

One purpose of Stevenson's attitude theory was to distinguish between factual discourse and moral discourse. Value judgements have factual content, but the judgements are not justified in terms of this content. R. M. Hare follows the noncognitivists by making this distinction. But, Hare takes the view that moral language functions differently from emotional or attitudinal language. It commends or condemns particular actions according to specifiable criteria and can, thus, be supported by reason. Moral language is more than simply attitudinal, it is 'prescriptive'.[23]

*Prescriptivism*

The language of values is everywhere the same, according to Hare. In particular, the word 'good' has the same meaning whether we are referring to a good strawberry, a good soccer player, or a good deed. The main mistake of the definists is their assumption that a single set of characteristics represents every good thing. And from this they claim, 'good' means this set of characteristics. This we have seen is not the case. Nevertheless, there is an important relation between the dscription and evaluation of an action or thing. Hare expresses this by introducing a very important distinction. The *meaning* of the word 'good' remains constant throughout all uses, but the *criteria* of 'goodness' will be different for different instances. This can be illustrated by considering the phrase, "dressed for the occasion". The meaning of this phrase will always be the same. The criteria that satisfies the condition of being "dressed for the occasion" will often vary. McIntosh describes how, even for the same 'occasion', the criteria change, when, in the

nineteenth century a soccer player was admired for skill in dribbling the ball, but in the twentieth century skill in passing became *as* important and then *more* important: "the criteria for calling a soccer player 'good' changed but the meaning of the word did not".[24] 'Good', then has a common meaning in all its uses. It functions as the most general term of commendation. This is the 'evaluative' meaning. The set of criteria to which the term 'good' refers is its 'descriptive' meaning. Hare expresses this as follows,

> It is time now to justify my calling the descriptive meaning of 'good' secondary to the evaluative meaning. My reasons for doing so are two. First, the evaluative meaning is constant for every class of object for which the word is used. When we call a motor-car or a chronometer or a cricket-bat or a picture good, we are commending all of them. But because we are commending all of them for different reasons, the descriptive meaning is different in all cases. . . .
> The second reason for calling the evaluative meaning primary is, that we can use the evaluative force of the word in order to *change* the descriptive meaning for any class of objects. This is what the moral reformer often does in morals; but the same process occurs outside morals. It may happen that motor-cars will in the near future change considerably in design (e.g. by seeking economy at the expense of size). It may be that then we shall cease giving the name 'a good motor-car' to a car that now would rightly and with the concurrence of all be allowed that name. . . . What is happening is that the evaluative meaning of the word is being used in order to shift the descriptive meaning; we are doing what would be called, if 'good' were a purely descriptive word, redefining it. But we cannot call it that, for the evaluative meaning remains constant; we are rather altering the standard.[25]

This seems to provide a satisfactory account of the use of moral language in sport. It particularly explains the changes of descriptive meanings of 'good' climbing over the decades (with changes in style and advancements in equipment) and in different areas. Can we judge a climber's actions to be 'good' or 'bad' if we know what the constituents of the action are and which criteria receive commendation? The answer is "yes" if there is a standard for measuring a 'good' climb. Now, the emphasis has changed from defining 'good' to determining the set of criteria that would satisfy such an evaluation.

It follows from the prescriptivist's analysis of 'good' that we should ask a person's reasons for choosing a particular set of criteria. Hare shows how this is relevant by inventing a game called *smashmak*, played with a thing called a *shmakum*.[26] To elicit from a 'smashmak'

player what a good 'shmakum' is without the player understanding the evaluative meaning of 'good', I must find out the criteria of a good 'shmakum'. Hare seems to suggest that this is tantamount to understanding the function or purpose of a 'shmakum' and then deciding which make of 'shmakum' best (being the superlative of good) fulfills this function,

> I then ask "Suppose you are buying a new shmakum, and you go [where] all sorts of shmakums are offered you, all about the same price, what sort of shmakum would you choose?"; and he replies "All other things being equal, I would choose the one that I could make the most *smashes* with". I then make a bold venture, and say "Ah, I see, then you think the *best* shmakum is the one that you could make the most smashes with".[27]

Hare is quick to point out that 'best' does not mean "what makes the most smashes". This is the mistake of the definists. This makes sense with respect to 'shmakums', which are means to the end of producing 'smashes'. We can objectively assess which would be the 'best'. Similarly, a 'good' recreational ski might be one that is most responsive and easy to turn for an intermediate skier, whereas a 'good' downhill competition ski needs to be longer, faster, and less flexible. There is no problem here if the selection of criteria is straightforward. The selection of criteria is less straightforward when we consider acts that are not clearly 'end' orientated. And the very nature of climbing as a 'whole' is related to the means as much as to the end. The climber rarely seeks the 'best' way to the summit (in the sense of the most efficient). Given that climbers deliberately set themselves obstacles to overcome, and that the purpose of the activity is the reaching of the goal *only* by overcoming these obstacles, a difficulty arises as to the criteria of 'goodness'.

It is here that the nature of the activity becomes important. If the 'game' of climbing is to remain an "interplay between possibility and actuality"[28], or a choice of less efficient in favour of more efficient means[29], then personal decision will affect a climber's choice of what is the 'right' course of action (with regard to aids). Chalk might be necessary if without it the climb is beyond the threshold of the climber's possibilities, but unnecessary if with it the means are too efficient. When considered thus, as a game played solely by the climber, the ethical question dissolves into one of personal decisions of principle. The use of aids becomes a moral problem if

climbers are competing against each other, or if their actions are injurious to fellow climbers. In these situations, the justification of our decisions requires deliberation about both the principles we adopt and their *effects*.

*The Closed-Criteria Argument*

Some philosophers have taken up the difficulty with the selection of criteria in Hare's thesis and suggest that it is not open to us to choose what counts as evidence for moral goodness. Hare's position allows an amount of autonomous choice as to what counts as evidence. Does this lead to the implausible situation where anything at all counts as a criteria of goodness if we choose to make it good? This would again lead to the impasse of adjudicating between different sets of criteria. Philippa Foot, along with other philosophers labeled as *descriptivists*, has tried to argue that the criteria describing the goodness of things are always determined and are not subject to personal choice. If this is not so, anything at all could be cited as a good reason,

> One man may say that a thing is good because of some facet about it, and another may refuse to take that facet as any evidence at all, for nothing is laid down in the meaning of "good" which connects it with one piece of "evidence" rather than another. It follows that a moral eccentric could argue to moral conclusions from quite idiosyncratic premises; he could say, for instance, that a man was a good man because he clasped and unclasped his hands, and never turned NNE after turning SSW. He could also reject someone else's evaluation simply by denying that his evidence was evidence at all.[30]

The "closed-criteria" thesis suggests that the selection of criteria is not a matter of free choice. Geoffrey Warnock states, "Not just anything can function as a criterion of *moral* evaluation".[31]The limits to our choices must somehow be inherent in the objects or agents involved in the actions. The point of the activity or the function of the objects involved necessarily imposes limits upon us. Foot uses the example of a good knife. It would be absurd to suggest a criteria of goodness for a knife such as: a blunt edge, a red handle, a snake-skin carrying pouch and an engraving of Mickey Mouse on the blade. A good knife will be one that fulfills its particular function.

Problems might arise, with a closed set of criteria, if we need to establish an essentialist definition of climbing.[32] We suggested above that climbing can be a different game for different people. Hare's prescriptivism accounted for this. It does not (as well) for the situation where all climbers are playing the same game. At the elite level this is the case. Here, the nature and function of the game needs to be decided. Paradoxically, what is not in question is a concept of justice or fairness between the climbers. Fairness could be created by allowing all the climbers to use chalk or denying the use of chalk to all climbers. However, we discussed at the very beginning that our concern would be with identifying what is in some sense objectively 'right' and not legislating a principle of justice. The question concerns, then, the nature of climbing in-itself such that climbers can be judged to be better or worse according to whether their actions correspond to the criteria of 'good' climbing.

The elimination of the use of aids from this set of criteria must be dependent upon them being contrary to the nature of climbing. If we assume that this is so, *all* aids must be eliminated. Thus, climbing is a contest between 'human' and 'nature'. On further investigation we see that most of the artifacts used when climbing are in fact 'aids'. Climbers wear especially adhesive shoes or in winter attach crampons to their boots. On big mountains they wear protective clothing, breath artificial oxygen, carry ice-axes and sometimes use ladders. Must we remove all these 'aids'? If artificial aid is contrary to 'good' climbing then, *reductio ad absurdum*, we must climb our mountains in the nude.[33]

Using aid is not alien to the nature of climbing. But, there is an obligation to use as little as possible. Hence, the obvious advancement from simply climbing Everest was to climb it *without* artificial oxygen (as done by Habeler and Messner in 1978). Our notion of 'good' (or the comparative notion of 'better') will depend upon what aids are used. Thus, if all other conditions are the same, the climber who did not use a point of aid is a better climber than one who did. This, trivial comparison, has never been in dispute. The dispute is better exemplified by the question, "If no climber could achieve an ascent without using aids, should an ascent be made at the expense of resorting to artificial means?" Clearly, this is a question concerning the nature of

climbing.

*Prescriptivism Again*

The closed-criteria thesis will always present this problem if the criteria are deemed to be totally inherent in the object, action, agent, etc. In summary of our climbing problem we arrive at an imperative, based on the criteria of goodness for climbing, that says "Thou shalt not use artificial aids". This can be reduced to absurdity. After qualification, a far more plausible imperative would be "Thou shalt not use more artificial aids than are absolutely necessary". We cannot add to this the clause "(and if you cannot do the climb without using such-and-such an aid then you are morally bound not to climb)" because this represents the problem of which aids to leave out and which to allow if they are all aids. Such a proposal is acceptable to the prescriptivist but not to the descriptivist. Yet, the descriptivist might argue that we implicitly invoke a closed set of criteria when we suggest that, "more artificial aids than absolutely necessary" should not be used. Admittedly, this remains an elective or subjective element (which aids do *I* feel would be appropriate or inappropriate to use) but, my choice is limited by a quite objective, definitional element. There are, clearly, some very definite conditions that must be satisfied in order to say that we are mountain climbing. For instance, we cannot be taking the telepherique (up the Aiguille de Midi, for example), or the train (up the Eiger), or a helicopter. This enables us to eliminate the possibility of using ladders and winches as acceptable 'aids'. But, the problems with 'chalk' and 'friends' are far more difficult to judge based on Foot's idea of definitional criteria. As suggested, though, this could still be an elective element which is nevertheless limited by our definition.

The acceptability of using any aid that is absolutely necessary reminds us of an issue that we pushed to the side. If using chalk is absolutely necessary for me (and *ipso facto* acceptable) then it might still be abhorrent to others who wish to follow me up the climb without seeing where all the holds are in advance.

Earlier (just before we turned to the closed-criteria argument) we saw how justification for selection of a criteria of goodness requires deliberation on principles *and* effects.

Hare believes that once we have given as many reasons as we can for our choice of criteria, if there are still conflicts, we have to take into account a complete specification of the way we choose to live. In the case of climbing, other principles become involved and the principle of 'good' climbing might not be compatible with another principle related to the effects of our actions on others. Ultimately, everything pertaining to the choice of retaining or rejecting one set of principles rests upon a decision of principle itself,

> A complete justification of a decision would consist of a complete account of its effects, together with a complete account of the principles which it observed, and the effects of observing those principles. . . . If pressed to justify a decision completely, we have to give a complete specification of the way of life of which it is a part. This complete specification it is impossible in practice to give; the nearest attempts are those given by the great religions. . . . If the inquirer still goes on asking "But why *should* I live like that?" then there is no further answer to give him, because we have already, *ex hypothesi*, said everything that could be included in this further answer. We can only ask him to make up his own mind which way he ought to live; for in the end everything rests upon such a decision of principle.'[4]

It is significant that Hare has openly embraced one form of utilitarianism. Does the adherence to a particular metaethical theory necessarily entail choosing a corresponding set of normative principles? An important aspect of the relationship between meta- and normative ethics is the carry-over from our principles in sport to our principles in everyday life, and in reverse. Above, we have seen how the adoption of prescriptivism allows a certain range of latitude in determining our criteria of 'goodness' for climbing. Do these principles override our other principles related to being a 'good' person, such that deceit and violence are acceptable in our criteria for being a 'good' player but are not acceptable in our criteria of a 'good' person? This relationship between principles and effects needs to be examined more thoroughly. If we are concerned with the consequences of our principles they may need to be continually revised. A descriptivist metaethical theory does not allow for this as easily as a prescriptivist one. Certainly, one purpose of ethical theory has been to try to gain knowledge of the truth and falsehood of normative statements. It may also be the case that our normative judgments upset our presupposed theory.

## VIII. ABSOLUTES AND CONSEQUENCES

In the last chapter we concluded that the moral evaluation of an act or rule depends upon a criteria of goodness. Are we impelled by this presumption to adopt any particular normative theory? For example, if a 'good' golf club is determined by its purposes of producing a certain shot, does 'good' always entail the best means to a specified end? If so, the ends or *consequences* of an act or rule are more important than the acts or rules themselves.

In judging something to be good or bad, we need to know what ends are desired, and whether these would be satisfied. So, a *consequentialist* is concerned with maximizing something considered to be valuable. What that valuable thing is may differ from situation to situation to situation, or from consequentialist to consequentialist. For instance, the desired end for a particular golf shot, such as 'driving' off the tee, will produce a different criteria of goodness (with respect to the club selected) than would pitching out of the bunker. Thus, a 'driver', 2-wood, 1-iron, or 2-iron might be the right club to use off the tee, but the wrong club to use in the bunker. Also, the club selected might vary according to the golfer's abilities. A novice might find that the control and accuracy gained from using a 3-iron off the tee outweigh the disadvantages of the shorter distance hit, particularly if the novice is inconsistent with the 'woods'. The purposes of each club producing a particular shot are also related to another overriding purpose: that of the game itself (to get round the course in as few strokes as possible etc.).[1]

### The Concept of Utility

The consequentialist position works much the same way with respect to moral

judgements. If we know what it is that we wish to maximize, then our conduct can be judged accordingly. In general, the moral worth of an act is judged according to the goodness and badness of its consequences. Suppose our ultimate aim is the preservation and maintenance of human life. This would be what we are attempting to maximize. Given this, consider the following hypothetical (but very possible) situation.

A small expedition of a dozen or so climbers is attempting a new route up a difficult face of a Himalayan mountain. The expedition is relying on 'seige tactics' to overcome the difficulties. That is, the climb is done in progressive stages, camps are set up and stocked along the way, fixed ropes are attached so that climbers can descend to the foot of the mountain and return to the previous day's highpoint in a short period of time. The expedition has reached a point where a camp has been established near to the summit from which an attempt can be made to reach the top. However, this has to be done quickly and over difficult ground. The group decide that retreat is possible from any stage up to the high camp, but from here the summit climbers must go all the way to the top to be able to descend down an easier route. Thus, from beyond the high camp there is a point of no return.[2] In preparation for this, the high camp is stocked with oxygen breathing equipment, food, and climbing gear to enable the climbers to wait at the camp for the right opportunity. In the meantime, a slightly easier route is climbed and camps established to aid the descent.

Eventually, all the preparations are completed. The high camp up the difficult face can be reached in a couple of days and two climbers are chosen to attempt the summit section. However, all the climbers have contributed to setting-up the summit attempt and it is agreed that as many as possible should get a chance to go to the top via the easy route. Thus, on the day of the summit attempt there are two climbers at the high camp on the difficult face and several other members of the expedition spread out in the camps on the descent route. The two pairs of climbers at the high camps on each route are scheduled to meet on the summit and descend together to a lower camp while four others move to the high camp to attempt the summit up the easy route. But bad weather sets in and prevents any movement up or down the

mountain. This continues for two or three days after which time it is agreed that the summit climbers should return: they are running out of food and oxygen and have spent too long at a debilitating altitude. However, the build up of snow over the three days has resulted in extreme avalanche danger. After a particularly heavy spell of snow-fall, one tremendous avalanche sweeps down the descent route and obliterates two of the camps, along with the equipment cached in them, and buries four of the climbers. At the same time, the condition of the two summit climbers has become critical. They have no food, are weak from lack of oxygen and suffering from frostbite.

Two situations have arisen. On the difficult route, two climbers need to be taken supplies and oxygen and then brought down. On the easier descent route, two climbers are trapped by the storms at the highest camp and four others are injured and unable to retreat without help and equipment. There are three or four climbers left at the base of the mountain with food, equipment and energy to launch one (and only one) rescue attempt. There is every reason to believe that either rescue would be successful, but also that it is imperative to carry out the rescues in both cases in the next few hours. It seems inevitable that only one route can be successfully evacuated and the climbers on the other route are trapped. What course of action is the right one given these circumstances? Either two people will die or six people will die.

*Utilitarianism*

The need for a principle from which to base judgements arises, here, through a conflict of desires. The morally right action, according to the consequentialist, is that which produces as much good in the world as (or no less good than) would any other act possible under the circumstances. There are three main courses of action in the above situation: in consequence, six people can be saved, two people saved, or no people can be saved. According to our aim of preserving and maintaining human life, the latter two courses of action would produce less 'good' than the first. The right decision is to sacrifice the two for the safety of the six.

The principle introduced here can be summarized as "the greatest good for the greatest number". All consequentialist theories share the conviction that human actions are to be

morally assessed in terms of their production of maximal value. 'Good' is associated with value and 'bad' with disvalue. Thus, the value of any thing, act or rule can be assessed according to its *utility*: that is, how much good it can produce. Such theories (and we will refer to all moral consequentialist theories as *utilitarian*) must, first, establish and justify what it is we should try to maximize. There is general agreement among *utilitarians* that our ultimate aims should be intrinsically, rather than extrinsically, valuable (ends in themselves rather than means to other ends). Consequently, we can appeal to the highest principle, the general goal of life, as being the most valuable *end* to which we must aim. For Bentham and Mill (the two most prominent founders of *utilitarianism*), this principle is based on what they to believe to be the undeniable, universal, empirical observation that everyone desires pleasure (and since this is the case then it has to be admitted that pleasure is desirable and of paramount worth). Actions are thus right in proportion to their tendency to enhance happiness or pleasure. Bentham states,

> . . . by the principle of utility is meant that principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question . . . if that party be the community in general, then the happiness of the community.[3]

Justification for the principle of utility cannot be found, and neither Bentham nor Mill appeal to definist theories.[4]However, once the intrinsic value of human happiness is accepted, utilitarianism offers a normative theory that enables us to objectively assess the rightness and wrongness of actions.[5]

*Acts and Rules*

In setting up a system of normative ethics, the utilitarian chooses to view either acts or rules as of major concern. *Act-utilitarianism* is the view that the principle of utility applies to particular *acts* in particular circumstances, whereas *rule-utilitarianism* is the view that the rightness and wrongness of an action is to be judged by the consequences of adopting a *rule* that everyone should perform this action in like circumstances. For instance, we can judge a deliberate foul on an opponent according to whether the consequences of the act are bad or

whether breaking the rule is bad. This might appear to lead to the same results, but it does not.

First, let us consider the rule-utilitarian view. According to this view, the greatest happiness in the long-term is increased by a set of acknowledged and enforced rules. A justice system, according to Hume, is founded on the long-term consequences of these rules.[6] In sport, then, the rules of conduct establish a system of fairness without which a game could not be played. They contribute to the attainment of a desired end by virtue of making that goal equally attainable by each side. There are inevitably instances when the adherence to a rule will lead to worse results (for one player or team) than will a breach of this rule (which might not necessarily lead to bad consequences for the other player or team). The argument of rule-utilitarianism is that the justice system is invariable. If exceptions are made in particular cases then the utility of rules is destroyed.

We need to ask what would happen if rules are not adhered to in general. In the case of games, the game cannot take place. For the rule-utilitarian it makes sense to ask whether we are obligated to follow the rules despite their immediate utility (or lack of utility).[7] McIntosh claims that,

> Keeping the rules and paying the penalties if they are broken are not moral obligations in themselves. They are merely the means by which a game . . . may be played. The only fundamental moral obligation is in the initial contract which a player implicitly makes when he elects to play.[8]

We can ask what it might be like if everyone broke the rules. Clearly, the game would be impossible. Thus, obeying the rules might be disadvantageous in a particular situation but we cannot opt out of obeying them whenever it suits us. Our obligation is towards maintaining a rule or justice system because of its overall utility.[9] Rule-utilitarianism is, clearly, consequentialist in its prudential adherence to rules as a means towards the end of maintaining fair play. In contrast, act-utilitarianism is concerned with the consequences of breaking a rule and not the hypothetical consequences of rules being broken in general. Some act-utilitarians have presented strong arguments to show how rule-utilitarianism cannot in all circumstances uphold the principle of utility. Suppose we accept that the rules should not be broken and that whenever

they are the offender should be penalized. The strict rule-utilitarian would claim that the rules cannot be superseded in favour of individual acts (regardless of utility). There are cases when this would lead to an unfair advantage being gained by the rule-breaker. For instance, in basketball, soccer, rugby and cricket the umpire has the discretion to not penalize an offense if it is to the advantage of the offended player or team to continue. It would be unfair to not allow a basket to stand (and give free throws instead, which are missed regularly) if a technical foul is committed whilst the shot is being taken, or a personal foul is committed on the player as the shot is being made. In rugby and soccer, the referee allows play to continue for a moment after an offense to ensure that stopping play would not disadvantage the team against who the infringement is committed. Similarly, in cricket, the batting player can score runs off a 'no-ball' but cannot be caught, bowled, stumped or l.b.w.[10]

In these situations, these exceptions are now written into the rules. However, the act-utilitarian can argue that this detracts from the use of rule-utilitarianism. What has happened is that the rules have become modified to allow the exceptions. Suppose that exception to the rule *R* produces the better consequences. Call these exceptions (circumstances) *C*. If this is evidence enough that rule *R* should be modified to allow this exception, then we have formed a new rule that states, 'adhere to *R* except in cases of *C*. Either rule-utilitarianism denies this (in which case it can be charged with 'rule-fetishism'), or it collapses into 'one-rule' rule-utilitarianism, "thus an adequate rule-utilitarianism would be extensionally equivalent to act-utilitarianism".[11]This argument will be the same in situations where it is fairer if a rule is broken, and in situations where there are two alternatives and choice of one over another will maintain that one rule is kept but the other is broken.[12]

The act-utilitarian is concerned with the utility of particular acts in particular circumstances. It is inevitable in sport that situations arise that lead to unfair consequences. Players do accidentally trip opponents or handle the soccer ball. To a certain extent, the rules and penalties are there to rectify the imbalance and not to deter the players from committing the offense. (At least, this is why they were originally devised). This tends to lead to a functional

approach to rules and laws. They maintain the framework and forms of sport and are not organized on moral principles. There is, however, a subtle difference between the maintenance of the game form and the legal sanctioning of unfair play.

Most team sports have rules that distinguish between an accidental imbalance and perpetual, deliberate rule breaking. It is inevitable that contact fouls will be committed. The laws differentiate between the accidental occurrence of these and persistent fouling. In soccer, players are cautioned ('booked' or 'shown the yellow card') if they are penalized for an offense three times. For an offense after this, they are 'sent-off' for the rest of the game (and in some cases banned from the next game). In basketball, a player who commits five personal fouls is excluded from further play. In soccer and ice-hockey, there are certain offenses that result in immediate removal from the game without caution.

These distinctions indicate that the act of breaking a rule is judged according to its immediate consequences and not with respect to the consequences of general rule-breaking. Thus, many accidental and deliberate offenses do not lead to 'bad' consequences because the umpire or referee maintains fair play (in the limited sense of equality). The so-called 'professional-foul' in soccer and ice-hockey is not 'bad' because there is no intention of beating the system and accruing greater utility for one team at the expense of the other.

The offense-punishment system in most games operates on the Mikadoan principle of making the punishment fit the crime. So, if the basketball is illegally intercepted on its way down to the basket ('goal-tending'), 2 points are automatically given to the disadvantaged team. In rugby, a penalty-try is awarded if a player deliberately obstructs an opponent from scoring. And, in soccer, a penalty kick (from which it is considered a player should always score a goal) is given for certain offenses if they occur within a demarkated area around the goal. Even in cricket, runs are awarded if the ball is bowled in such a way that the batsmen is not given a fair chance to strike the ball (a 'wide').

*Cheating and Morality*

A result of an act-utilitarian treatment of rules seems to be a diminishing of any

moral obligation towards the rules themselves. That is, the rules are not ends in themselves which we have a *prima facie* duty to keep. From an act-utilitarian view, breaking the rules does not seem to be immoral. Yet, 'cheating' is immoral, if by cheating we mean 'trying to gain an unfair advantage without being detected'.

We seem to be far less tolerant of cheats than we are of rule-breakers. Perhaps this is because the consequences of their actions are bad, in that they create inequality. Cheating does however, in general, involve the deliberate breaking of a rule. In rugby football a player might deliberately handle the ball in the scrum out of the referee's sight. But, cheating is occasionally more of a manipulation of the loopholes in the rules. Swimmers, sprinters, and rowers practise starting before the gun has gone off. If the referee sees this the race is restarted, but if it goes unseen then the participant gains an advantage. Arguably, this is a defect in the umpiring and not an act of 'cheating'. Cricketers bowl 'bouncers' to intimidate the batter. This is not illegal, but does gain an unfair advantage. In baseball, a pitcher is allowed to 'walk' the hitter to first base (and thus load the bases, or avoid pitching to a good hitter) by pitching four 'balls' deliberately. This is acceptable, but does not give the hitter a fair chance to play a stroke. McIntosh indicates,

> The conclusion of this argument is that there is no such activity as 'cheating' in sport. Systems of rules are there to be exploited. If they can be beaten they are defective or the persons enforcing them are inefficient. 'Cheating' then becomes a technical term, not a moral term. Morality does not arise.[13]

A particular act of conduct in sport, then, is neither wrong nor right outside of its consequences. Yet, this leads to the incongruity where rule-breaking is acceptable if done overtly but where playing within the rules can lead to bad consequences but is not penalized.

*Obligatory and Supererogatory Acts*

Alan Donagan has criticized all forms of utilitarianism by showing that they lead to far broader demands than our normal conceptions of moral obligation.[14] Donagan distinguishes between (1) *morally obligatory actions*, which are those governed by a sense of moral duty; and

(2) *supererogatory actions*, which are those over and above the demands of moral duty. His argument consists of imagining situations where an action would be beyond the demands of moral obligation but is demanded by the principle of utility.

Consider, for example, an extremely successful high-school basketball team in a very ethnocentrically segregated city. In past years the school team has been dominated by black players. This year, the team is split by the graduation of several of the players from the school. Four of the previous years' team still remain and are guaranteed places on the team by virtue of their individual skill and experience playing together. After the pre-season trials, a white player is picked to play as the first choice guard. Other than two or three mediocre players, no really talented newcomers emerge from the trial. The four black players, who are perhaps the main-stay of the team, refuse to accept the white player onto the team. This would inevitably lead to a break down of the team if they refuse to play and to a far poorer group-cohesion if they play but ignore the other player. According to the principle of utility, Donagan argues, the white player is obligated not to play as it is detrimental to creating the greatest good for the greatest number (the other four members of the team and the whole school who desire continued success of the team). Utilitarianism tends to obliterate the everyday distinction between moral obligation and supererogatory ideals.

We can apply the same distinction to the rule-utilitarian account of fair play and the unfair (but legal) acts we mentioned earlier. Unfair but legal acts in sport are not contrary to moral obligation but are contrary to supererogatory ideals. This does not upset the rule-utilitarian account. It is, however, incongruous with the act-utilitarian view of rules. We are compelled, according to this view, to not take advantage of these loopholes even though they have arisen through the inefficiency of the legal system. Yet, act-utilitarianism sanctions overt breaking of the rules. Even if this apparent paradox is not logically inconsistent, it is inconsistent with our general conceptions of rules and fairness. If, however, we resort to a rule-utilitarian approach, but extend this to include other maxims and allow for exceptions, then this is open to the same arguments against act-utilitarianism, by virtue of their equivalence.

In conclusion, either the notion of fair play in sport is a technical one and not a moral obligation or, if it is, utilitarian theories cannot adequately supply a theory of moral conduct in sport. We will assume that the former is unacceptable: it goes against our intuition to think that fairness has nothing to do with morality. We must turn our attention away from consequentialism to the alternatives.

**A Deontological Reply**

Utilitarianism conceives of the moral life in terms of means-to-end reasoning, whereby the end is the greatest intrinsic value and should be maximized. In contrast, *absolutist* theories argue that moral standards exist independently of the utilitarian ends. Thus, an act or rule is right insofar as it coincides with our nonutilitarian principle(s) of duty. This might in fact result in unfortunate consequences. For example, an absolutist response to our problem of the stranded climbers would be that the number of people involved is irrelevant. There is no way that we can justify saving six climbers instead of two; our choices will be purely arbitrary and can be decided by the flip of a coin. The main contention in the absolutist's argument is that consequentialism treats human beings as objects of value. That is, losses can be summed to different people. Arguably, the loss *to* a person of his or her life is more relevant than simply the loss of that person. Thus, we cannot say that it is a greater loss if six die than if only two die.

However, this is too simple a view of *absolutism*. We can admit that six deaths are worse than two. But, the absolutist does insist that it is not my business to bring about the better state of affairs. So, whereas consequentialist theories are interested in the end result and are not concerned with how it is brought about, absolutist theories are interested in what people do. They require agents to take up obligations not to act towards other people in certain ways, for example, imposing sacrifices on some for the benefit of others. It would be wrong for the high-school coach to keep the player from the basketball team in order to preserve the

happiness of the other players.

It is important to recognize that absolutist principles do not prescribe common goals. Take as an example the principle that we should not break rules. This does not mean, for the absolutist, we should have the common goal that the rules not be broken. Rather, it implies that each of us should have the same goal that the rules are not broken by any of us. So, my duty to preserve life does not reduce to the view that life should be preserved. This implies an objective aim independent of the agents seeking this aim. This would give me reason to allow two people to die in order to save six. This duty is universalizable in that I would wish it to become a categorical imperative, but it is nevertheless *my* duty.[15]This is distinctly different from the rule-utilitarian view. Thus, a player's rights are inviolable by the coach no matter what benefits might accrue. Absolutist theories, then, are *agent-centred*. In Kant's words, this means that we respect each person as a free moral agent and do not treat people as exploitable objects,

> . . . act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only.[16]

The immediate appeal of absolutist theories is their respect for individuals and individual autonomy.[17]

*Respect For Persons and Respect For Autonomy*

Most absolutist theories fall under a more popular term, *deontological,* from the Greek word *deon* meaning 'binding duty'. One of the most influential deontological theories is that of Immanuel Kant.

Kant, and many other deontologists, have maintained that only human beings intentionally perform actions that are motivated by moral rules. Humans act morally by virtue of having a rational "will". This confers on us an unconditional value independent of any other circumstances, whereas objects have merely a conditional value. Deontologists thus hold that a "species mistake" is made when human beings are treated in the same way as objects or other animals with only an instrumental value. (This is what happens in the case of the 'professional

foul' in soccer and ice-hockey). A common example of this deontological notion is the 'right to privacy'. This is considered to be beyond utilitarian measurement and evaluation. It is not simply a 'good' that is desired by people that can be weighed against other 'goods', but is inextricably related to the incalculable worth of each individual.[18]

There is necessarily a reciprocal respect for others in any moral relationship. In sport, to treat people as mere means to a goal of winning is to deny their moral agency. It is not only a *prima facie* duty to keep the rules, but also to respect the unconditional value of our opponents. Our actions are immoral when agents have the capacity to know their duty but reject this or act wrongly. This produces an important aspect of moral conduct in sport that was denied by a utilitarian treatment of rules. The sportsworld does not supersede the 'real' world with respect to our conduct towards each other. Morality cannot be put aside on the playing field *if* we are to retain our notion of unconditional value.

This notion of respect for others, however, demands that we allow persons the freedom to form their own moral judgements. Thus, we are morally autonomous.[19]Thomas Nagel states,

> Deontological requirements are agent-centred because they instruct each person to determine the rightness or wrongness of his acts solely from the point of view of his position in the world and his direct relation to others. The very idea that the basic moral concepts are right and wrong rather than good and bad entails that the character of one's actions rather than the world as a whole must be one's primary concern.[20]

Philosophers have characteristically associated this capacity for self governance with human reason and argued that the autonomous person, by this virtue, is more 'human' than the heteronomous person. Reason is considered more valuable than habitual or instinctive behaviour. The idea of an autonomous moral agent is important in the deontological account of fair play.

*Fair Play and Moral Obligation*

An important consideration, that we mentioned previously, is that players implicitly

accept the justice system of games by entering into them.[21]Fundamental to this justice system is the concept of fairness (or fair play), which refers to the right conduct of persons who are co-operating with or competing against each other. John Rawls indicates the importance of moral agency in this notion of fair play,

> The question of fairness arises when free persons, who have no authority over one another, are engaging in a joint activity and amongst themselves settling or acknowledging the rules which define it and which determine the respective shares in its benefits and burdens.[22]

Rawls argues that the participants in the game have the freedom to accept, or lodge complaint against, the rules. Engaging in the common practice of the game and accepting its benefits is a voluntary action.[23]There is a necessary submission of liberty in accepting this joint undertaking in order to make the game possible. Each player has the *prima facie duty* to comply with the rules, as well as the *prima facie right* to expect the same from others who have benefited from this submission. This does not involve an obligation which presupposes any deliberate performative act in the sense of promising or signing a contract. According to Rawls, it is sufficient that we knowingly participate and accept the benefits. We cannot be released from this obligation by denying the fairness of the system when it serves our purposes not to adhere. If we reject our obligation to the rules we must do so in advance and avoid partaking. Consequently, any acts which break the 'contract' of fair play in sport are immoral and not simply manipulations of the rules. Similarly, we cannot attempt to rectify an imbalance if fairness is not maintained. This is not our responsibility: we can perform our duties but should not attempt to bring about a certain state of affairs.

Rawls considers these duties to be those of fair play. What they also entail is that we feel or perceive what is fair. Thus, the notion of fair play can be extended to actions that are not legislated against by the rules, such as those mentioned earlier in cricket and baseball. An underlying principle in effect here is Kant's imperative, "act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law".[24]This necessarily implies a constraint on self-interest in cases where one knows that an advantage can be

(unfairly) gained, because, as Rawls points out,

> . . . acting unfairly is usually not so much the breaking of any particular rule, even if the infraction is difficult to detect (cheating), but taking advantage of loopholes or ambiguities in rules, availing oneself of unexpected or special circumstances which make it impossible to enforce them, insisting that rules be enforced when they should be suspended, and, more generally, acting contrary to the intention of a practice.[23]

Rawls' theory explicitly acknowledges that the duty of fair play necessitates recognition of other persons involved in the game with similar capacities, interests and feelings as oneself. The realization of our desires in games is a joint activity,

> Without this acceptance [players] would recognize one another as but complicated objects in a complicated routine. To recognize another as a person one must respond to him and act towards him as one; and these forms of action and response include, among other things, acknowledging the duty of fair play.[24]

## IX. REASON, HABIT AND MORAL EDUCATION

Sport is more than just education of the physical. Or rather, it *should* be more than just this. Many claims have been made for the varied functions of physical education and sport participation. Most of these link, in some way, the situations encountered in sport with those of everyday life. Sport can be considered as a training ground.

Some of these links are immediately obvious: those sports that involve direct competition are preparation for a competitive society; fair play in sport is congruent with the notion of social justice[1]; team sports promote an altruistic orientation that is desirable in a co-operative environment; and most obvious of all, physical activity helps to develop a fit and healthy body that is needed to cope with the stresses and rigours of life.[2]Our identification of these links merely illustrates the commonalities and does not necessarily entail any carry-over from the one to the other. But, the further claim, that sport *can* serve the purpose of developing socially orientated qualities in participants, has been made. Peter Arnold has prescribed to this view,

> One of the main concerns of education is the development of character and it is only right that it should interest itself in the direction it should take. The following socially orientated qualities should be fostered: kindliness, unselfishness, friendliness, truthfulness, courtesy, helpfulness, tolerance, cheerfulness, loyalty, co-operation and a general consideration for others.[3]

Views such as this are based on the 'links' mentioned above, and accept that sport offers numerous opportunities for concomitant learnings. For example, a child participating in a group activity is in a situation where he or she must be: (a) considerate or inconsiderate of others, (b) selfish or unselfish, (c) tolerant or intolerant, (d) reliable or unreliable, (e) fair or unfair, and (f) self-controlled or lacking in self-control.[4]These situations clearly permit dual possibilities, but

the teacher should in some way bring out the 'good' qualities. (We will only indirectly consider, at a later point in our discussion, whether this is achievable or not). This is often attempted covertly, in part of what is known as the *hidden curriculum*. That is, these things are not openly taught, but are realised through a child's overall immersion into the educational institution. The child is able to 'practise' the roles and develop standards of behaviour that are expected by society in general. Supposedly, the earlier a child is orientated towards a desirable code of conduct, the more internal the controls upon him or her become.

Physical education provides many decision-provoking situations through which a child can habitualize desirable behaviour. Arnold illustrates this,

> The activities with which physical education is concerned call for real decisions in real situations. They are not hypothetical, they are actual. The touch-judge whose team is drawing and who sees a winger of his team score a try after he has put his foot in touch is left with a choice of whether or not to put up his flag. He must make a decision and he will be forced into a position of acting truthfully or untruthfully. It is hoped he will make the right choice, in keeping with what he knows to be correct. It is no academic nuance. It is a test case of practical application.[5]

Most school sports and games played at a recreational level provide a variety of situations such as this. In our friendly tennis matches, there are no line judges or umpires. When we climb, there is nobody there to see if we pull on the rope. And golf, especially, is a game where moral conduct and etiquette are fundamental to the activity, yet, it is a game that gives more opportunities to cheat than any other.

### Origins of the Relationship Between Sport and Moral Education

Among the middle and upper classes in the nineteenth century, such games as golf, cricket and tennis appealed to the desire (associated with protestantism) to test one's character. The strict adherence to the ethics of the game was a distinguishing feature of the 'gentleman amateur' who was concerned with 'playing the game' and not merely winning at all costs. Most of our claims for the character building and friendship forming aspects of sport arise from this

era: a period in which a sharp distinction was first made between amateur and professional; when many team games were formalized and regulated; and when a philosophy of athleticism evolved that became known as *muscular Christianity*. Redmond summarizes some of the tenets of this philosophy,

> The sentiments of the muscular Christian gospel [were] that physical activity and sports (especially team games like cricket and football) contributed towards the development of moral character, fostered a desirable patriotism and that such participation and its ensuing virtues were transferable to other situations and/or later life (such as from playground to battlefield).[4]

As Redmond points out, the principal sports believed to help develop desirable virtues were team games. These embodied the spirit of unselfishness and taught respect for others. This is not to deny that the Victorians played to win. They were tough and aggressive competitors. But victory could not be gained at the expense of attendance to the constitutive rules and those of 'gentlemanly conduct'. The desire to win was definitely the motivation for taking part, although it could not be separated from how the game was played. These aspects simply added to the character building attributes of team games. Defeat helped to develop courage and perseverance. It also tied together the players in harmonious effort and led to a respectful appreciation of the opponent's victorious struggle. Charles Kingsley, whose work was some of the earliest to be labelled as 'muscular Christianity', wrote in his *Health and Education*, 1874,

> . . . that games conduce, not merely to physical but to moral health; that in the playing fields boys acquire virtues which no books can give them; not merely daring and endurance, but, better still, temper, self restraint, fairness, honour, unenvious approbation of anothers success, and all that 'give and take' of life which stand a man in good stead when he goes forth into the world, and without which, indeed, his success is always marred and partial.'

These games were often played without referees or umpires. Indeed, when the Football Association introduced the penalty kick (in 1891) for an intentional foul in front of the goal, many former public school players were offended by the suggestion that one gentleman would intentionally foul another.[5]Similarly, the law introduced by the Association in 1880 to penalize 'ungentlemanly conduct' was designed to prevent a breach of the very class-conscious social

mores.

The imposition of both these laws and others took place at the same time as professionalism in sport began to increase. The moral conceptions of sport began to differ when it was used for utilitarian purposes. The ideal of fair play, prevalent amongst those who considered sport as a hobby or leisure activity, was left behind by the priority of team interest and desire for victory. Once a referee or umpire was introduced, the notion of cheating began to change from simply breaking the rules, to refer to the breaking of the rules with the intention of deceiving the umpire. Overt breaking of the rules became acceptable. The referee was there to penalize this, which made the offence condonable. The players openly accepted the eye-for-an-eye orientation of offence and penalty.

Whereas moral conduct in team games began to alter from the 'gentlemanly', 'act-specific' codes of the amateur to the utilitarian, rule orientated codes of the professional, the opposite shift took place in mountaineering.[9] In fact, rock-climbing (as distinct from mountaineering) evolved out of this shift.

*The Development of Mountaineering as a Sport*

The so-called 'Golden Age' of mountaineering refers to the nine or ten year period between 1856 and 1865 when mountain climbing evolved as a sport. Up until the late eighteenth century, few people attempted to climb the fearful mountains of the European Alps. Indeed, they were seen as 'horrid' or 'awful', in the Gothic sense of these words. Those that did were either scientists or military personel[10]; if not, they were tempted by reward or fame. Initially then, the mountains were objects of utility.

The first major conquest, that of Mont Blanc (the highest mountain in Western Europe), illustrates this. The two successful climbers are exemplary of the early adventurers. Dr. Michel-Gabriel Paccard's principal interest in reaching the summit was to prove that Mont Blanc was higher than the (then) generally accepted height of 4,777m. (It is actually 4,807m). He took up an unusual partnership with the unpopular guide Jacques Balmat. Balmat was solely motivated by the substantial prize money offered by the distinguished Genovese professor,

Honore Benedict de Saussure. In 1760, de Saussure attempted to scale the mountain to make scientific investigations. Unsuccessful, he offered a reward to anyone who could find a way to the summit that he might follow. Balmat was so intent on gaining this prize, he left his mortally ill daughter in order to make an attempt (which failed). She died while he was on the mountain. It was not until 1786 that the ascent was finally made.[11]

In the next fifty years, the mountains were visited more frequently, often by local mountaineers who undertook their ascents for the sake of the climbing itself. The great impetus to the spreading of this interest amongst the British came from the writings of John Ruskin (1819–1900). Ruskin changed the 'dreadful' image of the mountains into one of romance and even mysticism. The culmination of this growing interest was Alfred Wills' ascent of the Wetterhorn in 1854. He described the ascent in his widely published *Wanderings Among the High Alps*. From here on, mountaineering became firmly established as a sport. Within three years (1857), the exclusive British Alpine Club was formed and the sport was pursued with such enthusiasm that by the end of the 1865 season nearly every major Alpine peak had been scaled.

This enthusiasm was almost exclusively British and dominated by the middle and upper classes. This is evident from the fact that it was not until 1863 that the Swiss formed an Alpine Club. The German and French clubs were not formed until 1869 and 1874, respectively. At the same time, the stigma of professionalism hung over climbing for utilitarian purposes. For this reason, climbs were always 'guided' by local experts, even though many of the British mountaineers became equal in knowledge and experience. This was purely a hobby-like activity for the 'gentleman amateur'.

The 'Golden Age' ended in 1865 with the ascent of the last major peak, the Matterhorn (and the scene of the first major tragedy). In 1860, Edward Whymper first arrived in Zermatt as an artist, but became compelled to climb by the desire to conquer the unscaled Weisshorn. When he was beaten to this by John Tyndall and company, he turned his attention to the Matterhorn.[11]On July 14, 1865, Whymper reached the summit with two guides and four other fellow climbers. On the descent, the youngest and least experienced member of the party,

Dougles Hadow, slipped and pulled three others with him to their deaths. Only the poor quality of the rope between these four and the others, which broke, prevented them from also being dragged down. Success and tragedy made Whymper the most well-known climber in the world, and his first book *Scrambles Amongst the Alps 1860-9* became a best seller. A passage from the book sums up what the Victorians felt about their pastime. It is interestingly comparable to the writings of Kingsley and Hughes,

> We glory in the physical regeneration which is the product of our exertions; we exult over the grandeur of the scenes that are brought before our eyes, the spendours of sunrise and sunset, and the beauties of hill, dale, lake, wood and waterfall; but we value more highly the development of manliness, and the evolution, under combat with difficulties, of those noble qualities of human nature - courage, patience, endurance and fortitude.[13]

The interest in climbing for its own sake was reflected by the development of rock climbing as a separate pursuit. No lofty peaks were attained, nor glory gained for summits conquered. People began to climb for the sake of climbing. Rock-climbing thus evolved in the Lake District of England and the Snowdon area of North Wales between the 1870s and the 1890s. It was the creation of a small group of people who shared three main qualities, as Hankinson notes: "a zest for sport, a high level of culture and education, and a uniquely romantic attitude".[14]This romantic attitude was expressed in the poetry of William Wordsworth (himself a Lakelander), a century before,

> . . . And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts, a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, and objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things. Therefore I am still
> A lover of the meadows and the woods,
> And mountains . . . [15]

This romantic frame of mind continued amongst the early climbers, and the growing circle of

participants became as much a social group as a climbing one.

**Evolution and Acceptance of Sports Inherent Values**

The writings of the 'Romantic Trust' in the early part of the twentieth century emphasized the social interation and companionship found in the sport of climbing. This was enhanced by the symbolic importance of the rope. The rope, tied around each climber's waist and knotted at the front, signified the epitome of dependence: the 'umbilical cord'.[16] The relationship between the two climbers was realized in the mutual dependance of each on the other. This basis of comradeship became known as the 'kinship of the rope', "Each roped man deliberately places his life in the hands of his companions. . . After many or arduous climbs together, individuals feel deeply this kinship of the rope".[17]The 'kinship' was at first a negative dependence. The ropes and protection techniques were so unreliable that a climber could not risk falling. This would likely be disastrous for both members of the rope. With the advent of better protection this dependence became positive: a member of the party could now rely on being held in the case of a slip.

*The Outward Bound Movement and Beyond*

The virtuous benefits of climbing were accepted openly by the Outward Bound movement. Its original founder, Kurt Hahn, made limited claims for these benefits. He proposed that that the physical challenges of the outdoors could lead to an awareness of dormant capacities within ourselves. But this did not prevent others from exaggerating the claims. Munrow mentions some of these,

> Some early brochures from Outward Bound Schools were fairly liberally besprinkled with phrases such as 'self-reliance', 'moral stamina', 'initiative' and 'powers of leadership'; one described courses as 'a splendid bridge to any career' and as enabling 'any boy to meet the responsibilities of manhood with greater understanding and confidence.[18]

Not only have the claims remained, but others have been added. Outward Bound courses have

become tailored especially for management training. Donnelly illustrates how, in the late nineteen sixties and early 'seventies, business magazines, such as *NewsFront: Management's News Magazine* and *Business Week* were publishing articles on 'Summer Camps with a Difference' and 'Pitting Managers Against Nature', which stated "We look to Outward Bound to instil in our future managers the traits we can't foster in regular training – maturity, character, confidence, the will to succeed, and an addiction to excellence".[19]

The (supposed) inherent values of sport have become accepted by many outside of the Outward Bound movement and outside of the sports themselves. Tutko and Bruns quote several prominent figures who have accepted these claims. General MacArthur states, "[Sport] is a vital character builder . . . It teaches [the youth of our country] to be proud and unbending in honest defeat, but humble and gentle in victory . . . It gives them a predominance of courage over timidity, of appetite for adventure over loss of ease". Similarly, Gerald Ford believes, "there are few things more important to a country's growth and well-being than competitive athletics. If it is cliche to say that athletics build character as well as muscle, then I subscribe to the cliche.[20]

**Habits: Sport and Moral Training**

We have taken a brief look at the background history that has influenced the formation of several beliefs relating the sporting environment with the enhancement of moral virtues. In particular, we have focused on the altruistic aspects of team sports (highlighted by the 'muscular Christian' gospel) and the friendship-forming qualities of climbing (stimulated by the 'kinship of the rope'). Both sets of situations are also believed to build character through challenge, struggle and perseverance.

At the start of our discussion we mentioned that physical education provides many decision-provoking situations which allow 'practise' and, consequently, habitualization of desirable behaviour. The sports highlighted in the historical background are ideal for presenting

these situations. However, exposure alone does not guarantee a certain response. Whether these sports *do* develop moral qualities is a question that has been considered elsewhere.[21] Arguably, evidence suggesting that they *do not* is not proof that they *cannot*. Given that these situations arise, we will first examine whether physical education *can* develop moral conduct.

Several important aspects arise from our preliminary discussion that we will concentrate on. The first of these is the objective of habitualizing desirable behaviour. Does sport serve the purpose of moral education if it provides such opportunities? Clearly, it does provide these situations. Durkheim suggests that these are part of an apprenticeship,

> . . . there is a whole system of rules in the school that predetermine the child's conduct . . . , a host of obligations that the child is required to shoulder. Together they constitute the discipline of the school. It is through the practise of school discipline that we can inculcate the spirit of discipline in the child.[22]

These obligations are 'act-specific', concerning attendance at school, discipline in the classroom, doing homework etc. They are comparable with the act-orientated code of conduct that was upheld by the 'gentleman amateurs'. The discipline of the game situation *trains* a child for acceptance of the discipline of social conformity. This is the value of practising the 'acts' themselves.

The early stages of child development are pre-theoretical, in the sense that no reasons are given for why things should be so.[23] A child who asks why the ball is returned to the centre of the pitch after a goal is scored might be told that this is simply the way things are done. At this stage, the *principle* of fair play is not brought in. The child learns to perform acts as an integral part of a way of doing something. Most learning processes at this stage are situation specific. That is, we tell a child that such-and-such an act is 'naughty', but we do not attempt to explain how to prejudge which acts are 'naughty', and neither do we define what 'naughtiness' is. A further example of the 'act-specific' orientation of the 'hidden curriculum' is the labelling of certain behaviours as good or bad. This is illustrated by the formerly arranged syllogism:

Bad children are punished, and

I was punished for kicking the goalkeeper.

So, I must be a bad child.

The deduction is invalid.[24] I have commited a punishable offence, which is not necessarily the act of a bad child. This helps to distinguish between what I have termed an 'act-specific' orientation and the utility of rules. The Victorian public school player held moral conduct to be identical in both sport and everyday life. Thus, if the act of cheating is 'bad', then anyone who cheats is behaving immorally. In contrast, the 'professional' tends to adopt a utilitarian outlook.[25] The act in itself cannot be judged 'good' or 'bad' outside of its consequences. So, it is not immoral to deliberately break a rule providing it is an open act that can be spotted by the referee and penalized.

Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development consists of two 'preconventional' stages that correspond to what we have termed the 'pretheoretical' level.

> At this level the child is responsive to cultural rules and labels of good and bad, right or wrong, but interprets these labels in terms of either physical or hedonistic consequences of action (punishment, reward, exchange of favours) or in terms of the physical power of those who enunciate the rules and labels.[26]

The next stages after this are at the 'conventional' level. These stages are not prudentially orientated but concerned with maintaining and supporting the social order. This order is considered to be valuable in its own right. Stage three of development is the "interpersonal concordance or 'good boy - nice girl' orientation", and stage four is the "law and order orientation". The correct or right behaviour consists of adhering to stereotypical images, convention and authority.[27]

The four stages that make up Kohlberg's 'preconventional' and 'conventional' levels of moral development are concerned with the socialization of individuals into desirable patterns of behaviour. This is covertly attempted in physical education by the habitual performance of moral actions, such as: playing fairly, co-operating with team mates and showing restraint under

pressure of defeat. It is not enough to *teach* what is right or wrong. It is for this reason that moral education is a latent function of the school. It is not taught directly as a subject, but indirectly through experience. Neumann suggests that children actually have to perform the actions themselves to internalize a desirable pattern of behaviour,

> The most important moral agency, when it is rightly inspired, is found in the actual performance of the pupils themselves. It is one thing to hear right conduct praised or to see it exemplified; it is quite another, and more necessary thing, for boys and girls themselves to do the acts. Character is essentially a matter of action, the habitual performance of certain kinds of deeds rather than others, and the only genuine way of learning how to do these deeds is to do them, just as the only way to learn tennis is to play it.[28]

Is this notion of habit congruent with the meaning of moral behaviour? In our previous discussion we considered morality as the adoption of a social-contract or universal ethical principles. Habitual behaviour need not necessarily be based on a grasp of any fundamental moral principles. Taking the ball to the centre circle to start the game might be the fairest way to begin, but is often done out of habit, without recognition of this (although the players might well recognize this if they reflected on it). Consider an example where a golfer slices a shot into the trees. Having found the ball, the golfer takes several practise swings and then attempts a shot but only succeeds in burying the ball two inches deeper into the rough. This procedure is repeated again and again with the same results. Eventually, the golfer is successful and the players proceed up the fairway and complete the hole. On the next tee, the scorer asks the golfer for a total for the previous hole. The player hesitates and then adds up all the strokes in the trees and tells the scorer. Let us call this 'telling' of the score the *resultant action*. Suppose the player had hesitated because he or she thought that they could get away with declaring less strokes than they had played. Upon reflection, the golfer gave an honest assessment of the total. The 'resultant action' was the correct one. But, was it morally good by virtue of its correctness? Let there be three alternatives to the golfer's reasoning behind the decision: (1) he or she would have cheated but was sure that one of the others had been counting the strokes, (2) his or her apprehension made them decide that honesty was the best policy, and (3) the golfer decided that

cheating is wrong. In each case the 'resultant action' would be the same. However, if (1) we would definitely not say that it was performed for moral reasons. We might also hesitate to say that (2) was performed for moral reasons. If "honesty is the best policy" is a prudential principle that simply means "dishonesty does not pay off in the long run", then (2) is not concerned with the morality of telling the truth, but rather its utility. (3) would be the only action based on moral reasoning. Thus, either the 'resultant action' is a moral one regardless of the reasons for its performance (which we would doubt in this example), or the performance must be accompanied by moral reasons. Arguably, the latter is correct. We could try to justify this further by showing that a child constrained to steal by a parent is not behaving immorally because he or she is forced to do it. In this case, the act cannot be separated from the circumstances of the producer. A court of law would have to judge the intent of the child. (A counter argument here would be that the act itself is immoral but that the child is absolved of any responsibilty for its performance). However, would the child be acting immorally if he or she freely chose to steal (that is, without threat of punishment if he or she refused) but did so because of being socialized into stealing by the parents? Is this form of determined behaviour any different from the actions of the child brought up to be habitually 'good'? Kohlberg maintains that moral education should be concerned with principled moral judgements. This is reflected in our actions, but it is our judgements which are important. The inculcation of habits can be considered as moral *training*. Kurt Baier distinguishes between this and moral *education*,

> The difference between moral training and moral education is that moral training is a process whereby a child acquires the morality of his community, whereas moral education is a deliberate activity, carried on primarily by professional teachers, for the purpose of fostering moral excellence in the young.[29]

Physical education faces two problems in the claim to be a moral educator. First, if our code of conduct is act-orientated then these acts are legitimated pre-theoretically (without any attachment to their underlying principles), if they are inculcated as habits at an early age. Is this training or education? Second, if we adopt a utilitarian approach to rules as simply constitutive components of a game, without moral content, then physical education teaches adherence to

authority and not moral reasoning. Is this moral education or simply socialization (even indoctrination)? These two problems might appear to disprove our claim that physical education can be moral educator. However, we might have been too presumptious to associate habit (merely) with training.

**The Paradox of Moral Education**

This dilemna is not a new one. Its consideration has become termed "the paradox of moral education".[30] Kazepides summarizes how the alleged paradox appears,

> When one thinks seriously about moral education one is struck by the apparent paradoxical nature of the whole enterprise, for it appears to be an attempt to develop (produce, engineer, create) the rationally autonomous moral agent by non-rational means. Since we are often unable to communicate with young children in what we consider rational ways, we try to habituate them into desirable ways of behaving by some form of conditioning or we sometimes try to persuade them to act morally by offering them non-moral (e.g., prudential, utilitarian) reasons. Moreover, the relationship between the young and the adult moral authority is, at least initially, one of total dependence, a dependence deemed to be necessary as a condition for their gradual emancipation and development into autonomous moral agents.[31]

The origin of the paradox is the question of how virtue can be taught (raised by Socrates in discussion with Protagoras): is virtue the 'correct opinion' and conventional behaviour of well brought up people? Or, is it conduct based on a group of fundamental moral principles? This clearly distinguishes 'virtue' as being associated either with the 'resultant action' or with the moral reasoning, as we discussed above. However, according to Peters, it was Aristotle who was led into the supposed paradox by his attempt to combine the two and stress the roles of both reason and habit.[32] Aristotle states, in the *Nichomachean Ethics*,

> One might be puzzled as to what we mean by saying that in order to become just, men must do just actions, and in order to become temperate they must do temperate actions. For of they do just and temperate actions, they are just and temperate already, just as, if they spell correctly or play in tune, they are scholars and musicians.[33]

Taken out of context, Aristotle appears to be saying that in performing just actions we become just, but are already just by virtue of having performed these actions. So, a child is behaving morally even when behaving out of habit. However, Aristotle qualifies this by saying that the agent is behaving morally, only if a) they know what they are doing, b) they choose the act for its own sake, and c) they are consistent in these acts. In his words, "the agent is just and temperate not when he does these acts merely, but when he does them *in the way* in which just and temperate men do them".[34]

This leads us to comment on the second of our problems outlined earlier. The acceptance of the rules merely as a part of the game and not for their purpose of maintaining fair play is not an acceptance of the morality of sport. It is a utilitarian treatment of the rules as means to an end. This suggests that the sportsworld is separate from the 'real world' and that our conduct in each is different. Sport serves little purpose as a 'training ground' if this is the case. Keating points out though,

> . . . the source of the confusion which vitilates most discussion of sportsmanship is the unwarranted assumption that sport and athletics are so similar in nature that a single code of conduct and similar participant attitudes are applicable to both.[35]

Let us make this distinction and limit our claims to 'sport' rather than including 'athletics' (the North American term for highly competitive and/or professional sport). Even accepting this, sport is often limited as a tool of the moral educator. It generally does not advance beyond Kohlberg's 'conventional level' of development, which emphasizes adherence to authority and social norms, but it needs to (and can) to be of value in moral education.[36]

The first of our two problems is still left to be discussed: are reason and habit compatible in moral education? It seems to be generally accepted that moral actions must be based on dispositions to act according to fundamental ethical principles. That is, the golfer is not acting morally by giving the correct score if this is not done with an acceptance of the 'rightness' of honesty. Peters tries to escape his own paradox by showing how it rests on a conceptual confusion about the meaning of 'habit'. That is, 'habit', as Peters proceeds to discuss it, does not

necessarily exclude the use of intelligence. This is illustrated by the child's ability to separate an underlying rule or principle from the act itself. For instance, a parent who discovers their five-year-old daughter hitting her two-year-old brother over the head with a saucepan, and says "Don't do that, it's naughty", does not mean "Don't use a saucepan. It's naughty; you should use a hammer". Moral *training* does not entail getting a child to perform faultlessly a fixed, habitual drill. Otherwise, the child would have to learn as many 'drills' as there might be situations to act upon. As Peters points out, "the child has to learn to see that a vast range of very different actions and performances can fall under a highly abstract rule which makes them all examples of a type of action".[37]

*Habits without Reason: Etiquette and Indoctrination*

The way to bring reason and habit together is to allow the learner the opportunity to make decisions for himself or herself in different situations. These decisions are based on principles that are abstracted from the acts themselves. Thus, we should teach what fair play means, rather than what constitutes an act of fair play. This is not always done. Even when teaching aspects of skill and strategy we do not always extract the principles from the instances. For example, the concept of 'good length' in squash is often taught using the example of the basic forehand or backhand 'drive'. As such, a 'good length' will be a shot that hits the front wall just above the cut line, bounces in, or around the area of, the service box and 'dies' in the back of the court. Students tend to focus on one or two aspects, such as getting the ball to bounce in the service box, and fail to recognize the underlying principle which allows for transference to other situations. Clearly, the service box has nothing to do with the concept of 'good length'. If the ball is hit very gently, it will need to be hit higher up the front wall and land further back down the court in order to 'die' in the back corner. The inability to see the commonalities in different actions undoubtedly exists in everyday occurrences.

Contradictions are particularly apparent between similar acts in sport (as well as between attitudes and behaviours). Players ceremoniously shake hands before an important soccer game and exchange shirts afterwards (usually quite amicably and sincerely). Yet,

throughout the game they verbally harass, spit at, punch, and trip their immediate opponents. These are contradictions that occur when the etiquette of the sport has been habitualized. However, the habitualization of sporting etiquette is *not* moral education. There is little or no carry-over from the situation-specific mores of particular sports like cricket and golf to more general instances.

Given that moral education requires the teaching of reasoned principles, we need to draw a further distinction between the uses of socialization and indoctrination. Indoctrination is a very emotive term, and few parents or educators would admit that they in any way indoctrinate. Let us determine exactly what is meant by the term. Indoctrination is quite distinct from conditioning or from the use of force. Suppose we bring up our children to be repulsed at the thought of masturbating. A child might understand that there is nothing wrong with masturbating, but nevertheless feels strongly against doing it themself. This is 'conditioning'. If a parent tries to prevent the child from masturbating by threat of punishment, then this is 'force' or 'constraint'. However, indoctrination occurs when the child is persuaded not to masturbate by being giving reasons that are either false or indefensible. For instance, the parents might say, "If you masturbate, you won't be able to have children". Surprisingly, we indoctrinate a great deal of the time when we try to socialize children into a certain behaviour which we cannot justify. Many parents use an 'appeal to a higher authority' because they do not know how to determine why things are right or wrong, or what reasons they can give the child. So, a child is taught not to do certain things because God will punish them, or because Father Christmas does not bring toys to naughty children. Nearly all teaching of etiquette and manners is, in some way, a form of indoctrination, unless taught in a way that makes it clear they are simply social customs.

The resort to accepting behaviours as social customs is, in fact, a less obvious form of indoctrination. Indoctrination applies to any method which consciously attempts to implant a dogmatic belief that is causally motivated, rather than rationally motivated. Consequently, the believer might be able to give reasons for the belief, but these will not be the true motivators of this – they will simply be rationalizations. That is, in this instance, the reasons themselves are

not causally operative in the belief. The dogmatic obedience to authority or custom is often mistaken for morality. Thus, in physical education, it is not enough to teach people the etiquette of the game, or to teach players to obey the rules on the basis of the acceptance of the authority of the referee. If sport is used, in this respect, to train children to accept the legal system, then it is not moral education.

*Habits Based on Principles*

Undoubtedly, a child cannot always grasp a principle, and rarely comprehends the reasons behind the principle. The training of habits must take place during these formative years. However, the onus is on the educator to be able to justify the habits which are being formed. One result of this is that moral education cannot remain a 'hidden' part of the curriculum, to be undertaken haphazardly by teachers unaware of their role in these formative years. The physical educator must be aware himself or herself of the moral principles affecting our conduct in sport.

As the child becomes more able to reason, the emphasis of moral education changes to accommodate the different stages of moral development. Kohlberg's last stage is the "universal ethical-principle orientation",

> Right is defined by the decision of conscience in accord with self-chosen *ethical principles* appealing to logical comprehensiveness, universality, and consistency. These principles are abstract and ethical (the Golden Rule, the categorical imperative); they are universal principles of justice, of the reciprocity and equality of human rights and of respect for the dignity of human beings as individual persons.[11]

The consequences of this approach to moral education can be summarized with respect to the claims that sport is a 'training ground'. As we have seen, the Victorian code of 'gentlemanly conduct' is based on the acceptance of acts, normally associated with the very specific etiquette of a particular game. Golf is one sport with an abundance of conventional procedures such as this. There are often (good) reasons behind the formation of these manners, but they are rarely mentioned in the habitualization of newcomers into the customs. While these acts remain

separated from any underlying principles they are of little or no use to educators. The character building claims of these sports are more vague and harder to pin down. But clearly, the numerous incidents involving false claims of first ascents in the mountains, give strong evidence that climbing itself has little effect on character. It is certainly not as Douglas would have us believe, "I have never met along the trails of the high mountains a mean man, a man who would cheat or steal".[39]This leads us to the 'kinship of the rope'. Klaus Meier has assessed this claim and argued that such friendships, if founded on the "loving struggle", are "existentially deficient". He notes that,

> If the nature and comprehensiveness of the relationship between individuals are based solely upon the immediate concreteness of the situation and are limited to specifiable, utilitarian or pragmatic intentions or purposes (such as solving a particular problem posed by the configuration of a section of the mountain), the communication manifested, in a very different sense, may be termed impersonal. . . The perceived significance of this type of camaraderie is based upon task fulfillment rather than full and authentic inter-personal communication.[40]

Finally, if habits and reasons can be in some way combined, whereby one assumes principles as a matter of habit until able to reason their justification (or change one's principles), then sport does have a role to play as part of moral education. We have discussed previously the formation of principles of conduct and categorical imperatives. We have also looked at the metaethical background behind the establishment of these fundamental principles. Peters suggests that we are able to "enter the Palace of Reason through the Courtyard of Habit and Tradition".[41]This we are able to do if our learning of games is based on an understanding of what it is to play a game. We have discussed the prescriptivist's and descriptivist's notions of 'criteria' for determining 'goodness'. Moral education can become a part of physical education if the playing of sport is informed by a comprehension and reasoning of the purposes of constitutive rules and the maintenance of fair play. If this becomes the case, not only will sport provide situations where our conduct has a bearing on all aspects of our life, but moreover, the two situations will be based on the same dispositions and actions. Morality in sport and morality in all other spheres are inextricably intertwined. As Hirst says,

For the fully consistent moral life, the dispositions must also be in keeping with the same rules and principles. It would in fact seem to be the case that what we usually mean by a virtue or a vice (say honesty or cruelty) is not simply the disposition to think and act so spontaneously and even unconsciously. The dispositions of the moral life therefore need to be all of a piece and consistently related to the person's underlying moral rules and principles.[43]

## X. THE FUTURE

Throughout our discussions we have looked at the way things are. That is, we have questioned what reality is, whether life has any intrinsic meaning, what it means to die, whether ethical knowledge is possible, and what it is to be just and fair. However, we have at times prescribed how things could or might be. For instance, we have speculated on a world where play and games are no longer considered to be 'non-serious', 'artificial' or 'unreal'. In chapters 3 and 8, we discussed (although indirectly) *ideal* worlds; in the sense that we examined the essence of game playing or the establishment of a justice system.[1]

We could leave this collection of 'problems' here, but some of the themes we have considered and the images we have developed need to be collected together. Several of these themes have been common to most of the chapters: in particular, the ideas of a free, autonomous agent and the rejection of a closed, deterministic and objectified sportsworld. To conclude, then, let us look to the future and consider some possible worlds (incorporating some of these themes).

### Utopian Thought

Visions of the future are not all utopian. And not all utopian visions are of the future. What then is this thing or state of being, this fictitious place or psychic condition, that we call utopia? There is a general tendency to consider all forms of futurology and speculation as in some way "utopian". In the light of present trends in science fiction and popularized science 'fact', the word "utopia" summons up very different images. We sometimes associate it with fantastical, idealized but unrealizable worlds, or alternatively (in the "dystopian" tradition) with the degeneration and destruction of society as we know it. It has also taken on a pejorative

sense as irresponsible speculation with little concern for human and social interests, even as "scaremongery".

Yet, the tradition of utopian literature does not belong to fantasy, regardless of its fictitious nature. It has more in common with other modes of social and political thought. Utopian schemes are concerned with ethics and values in an attempt to determine the main requirements of a viable functioning society. In this sense, they are instruments for analyzing and investigating the desirability of values by depicting a society in which the implications of specific beliefs and ideals are fully realized. Raymond Ruyer considers them mental exercises or thought experiments,

> The utopian mode of thought belongs by nature to the realm of theory and speculation. But unlike theory, which seeks knowledge of that which is, the utopian mode of thought is an exercise or a playing with the possibilities lateral to reality. In the utopian mode of thought intellect becomes "a power of concrete operation"; it amuses itself in trying out mentally the possibilities which it sees overflowing reality. The utopian mode of thought is related to "understanding"; it depends on an initial understanding of reality, and in its turn it helps toward a better comprehension. . ."[1]

Utopian thinking has been defended by Karl Mannheim as a reaction to the stabilizing influence of ideology on social reality: utopian visions of the future could inspire the necessary collective actions required to bring about change. And the actual construction of utopian states has occupied the works of classical and contemporary philosophers; from Plato's *Republic* to Robert Nozick's *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (1974).

The problem with many modern speculative works, such as Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock* (1970) is pointed out by John Maddox in *The Doomsday Syndrome* (1972): we are distracted from doing something now about our environment because of the too distant and futuristic setting of most threats of ecological doom.[2] The important distinction that needs to be made between predictive analysis of technological advancement and utopian construction in the more traditional sense is the preoccupation of the latter with its attempts to change society now. With respect to these, Walter Fogg points out that,

> A history of such projections indicates that they are far from being merely fanciful. They are both responses to and extrapolations from the changing, conflicting realities and possibilities inherent in the history of the period.[4]

In this discussion we will attempt to draw some analogies of sport situations with some of the classical and modern utopian ideals. Hopefully, some possible future directions for the sociological and historical studies of sport, arising from contrasts between the nature of sport and utopian/dystopian literature, will become clear. Most importantly, we will consider whether, for sport and physical education (as David Riesman does for sociology), utopian thinking can serve as a precaution against the dogmatic reliance upon facts so predominant in the natural and physical sciences. Finally, we will draw some comparisons between the problems facing utopian theorists, concerning the dilemna of individual freedom and social justice, with the contradictory influences shaping the development of sport.

*The Need For Questioning The Way Things Are*

The underlying emphasis in utopian literature is the need for change. In contrast the institution of sport tends toward a closed and ordered society. In chapter 2, we questioned whether there is just one sportsworld: for instance, that of the sociologist, the historian or psychologist. All of these sub-disciplines within physical education present versions of the 'world' as if it is closed and determined. We contrasted the objective depiction of what sport is with the subjective experience of the individual in sport and argued whether one is any more 'real' than the other.

The very processes of habitualization and regulation required to systematize our game or sport forms serve to maintain the structure of the institution. To a certain extent, these are contrary to our notions of free will and autonomy.[5]The legitimations for such processes proposed by Berger and Luckmann do not question the underlying values of the prevailing ideology.[6]The institution remains static whilst the individual becomes socialized into the value structure. Ingham and Loy point out that, "the legitimations of sport are incorporated into an ideology which legitimates the taken-for-granted social world."[7]

Utopian and dystopian literature has centred on support for, or opposition to, the unquestioned permanence of what may be called the "Establishment". As such it has been used as a standard of judgement (in classical utopias from Plato to More) and a method of social criticism (in modern utopias). By undertaking such a judgement or critique the utopian author undertakes the necessary attempt of justifying the values upon which the critique is based. We have not begun with a utopian vision, but rather, we have made our critique or assessment of many established conceptions concerning physical education and sport. This is not so different from the utopian author's method. What we do have in common is an awareness of certain problems with the way things are. We too have implicitly suggested that this need not be so. In sport and physical education we can see the same unquestioned permanence that is attacked by the utopian. Glen Negley identifies three common elements in utopian works,

> (1) since the earliest social organization, the Establishment has represented the prevailing and restrictive structure of a particular society; (2) the Establishment represents a monopoly of power entrenched in the *institutions* of that society; (3) political, economic, religious, and cultural controversy has generally been within the framework of utopian–dystopian attitudes toward the dominant Establishment.[1]

Consequently, the utopian construction questions those levels of legitimation that serve to reinforce the institution and rejects the suggestion that the immanence of future arrangements is historical: necessarily developing out of the past. If sport history relies on such precepts then it is in danger of committing the 'naturalistic fallacy' of basing the prescription for the way sport *ought to be* upon the description of the way sport *is*. The justification of why sport *is* valuable by descriptive analysis of history alone paradoxically assumes the validity of the very values in question that sport upholds. Such an undertaking perpetrates the false belief that it is evidence enough for the desirability of sport to provide historical description that people do actually desire it. In a similar attempt to that of modern utopian authors, perhaps sport historians should be concerned, not with assessing how sport has become what it is but, with identifying the absence, if any, of certain social arrangements that when present in the past determined what sport *was*. Obviously, in utopian literature this would be undertaken by speculation of what sport *may*

*become.* Either way, we (as analysts) cannot remain purely descriptive but must necessarily make ethical judgements concerning the dominant values of society.

The academic sub-disciplines within the encompassing boundaries of Physical Education accept too readily Berger and Luckmann's pretheoretical level of legitimation in their research undertakings. In particular, exercise physiology, bio-mechanics, psychology and other areas aimed at maximizing performance unquestioningly accept the way sport is by servicing its needs.[9] Again, the assumption is that the way sport is reflects what it *ought to be.* This is not an open acceptance, but is necessarily implicit in the nature of scientific inquiry into performance. The desire to continue on the same path of improvement and advancement suggests a Baconian view of immanent progress through scientific advancement.[10]

Imagine a road from A to B. The sciences just mentioned can be represented by the engineers that build the road and the oil companies supplying gas stations that enable us to get from A to B. They are necessary services that enable us to complete the journey more efficiently and quickly. Their conception is due to the exploitation of that need without questioning it or asking whether it will always be there. What if the travellers go from A to C, or cease to travel at all?

One common contemporary dystopian theme warns against the technological norms of efficiency and production dominating with its values, exclusive of all others. The closed perspective of the logic of scientific progress is seen as destructive of human values. In a slightly similar manner, we considered this as one of the criticisms of consequentialist ethics. The end-orientated perspective reduces agents to objects with a calculable value. The desired end becomes more important than the means of producing that end. But in chapter 2, we argued that we do not in fact desire the outcome in itself, but the process of its achievement. The distance jumped means nothing outside of how it was jumped and who did the jumping. In general, the view of scientific progress ignores the human agent in that view. This theme will be explored later.

*The Need For Change*

Some of the most interesting speculations concerning the future of particular sports have come from the popular sporting press, with short stories depicting projections of present developments. Two sports that immediately come to mind are running and mountainering: the former because of the increased participation levels and the latter as a warning against government involvement restricting access to mountain areas and imposing stringent safety regulations. However, neither of these topics has attempted any ethical debate concerning how these sports *should* be conducted. Ironically, two of the most recent arguments over developments in sport, that have used a forward looking analysis, have been undertaken in order to defend the way sport *is*.

First, speculation has arisen over the future of soccer (specifically in Britain and on the Continent) as to whether artificial playing surfaces should replace the traditional, but extremely undurable, grass pitches. The main concern is that the nature of soccer will change drastically. Of this there is no doubt: the game as it is played on "astroturf" is indeed a very different game.[11] Yet, the debate has centred on how it *ought* to be played and fallaciously the prescription for what soccer should be has come from the description of what it *is* and *has been* for the last 100 years or so. Little time has been spent on assessing whether the quality of the game will improve. Traditionalists are guilty of what we will call the *Alice and the Croquet Game fallacy*. When playing (what Alice believes to be) croquet with the Queen of Hearts (there are obvious components in the game that Alice recognizes as constituent parts of 'croquet') she cries "foul" when one of the playing cards forming a tunnel moves away from the path of her ball, and yet nowhere are the rules laid down to state that this is not acceptable. Because of the obvious similarities between the two games Alice judges what is in fact a completely different game according to the values of the game that she knew previously. Defending the way soccer *is* played relies on the unquestioned maintenance of the present state of affairs. This is illustrated again in a more controversial example.

Dystopian warnings have been projected by many as to the degeneration of the

Olympic games, and of track and field athletics in particular, if professional athletes are no longer restricted from competitions previously exclusive to amateurs. (The images of a financially dictated, media influenced development of the vogue events at the expense of the less popular contests are well known and the arguments over the future of the "amateur" in sport are not of concern here). What does need to be highlighted is the dogmatic defense of the present state of affairs without justification for its existence.

The propogation of the Olympic Games and its 'copies' cannot be defended by historical analysis of its *natural* development into its present state in order to validate reasons for its remaining unchanged. The belief that sport is "as old as the hills" conceals the anachronistic nature of the Olympic conception. Questioning the place of the Olympic institution in utopia is not merely speculative whimsy but a necessary analytic step in determining the value and need for the Olympic ideal, which is clearly becoming problematic. Historical descriptions that trace the origins of the Olympic games in Greek and Roman history without determining the function of these games in society, and assessing the social arrangements and influences that differ from the present, are both misleading and of little value in judging the place of the Olympics in contemporary society (if, of course, this is why any comparison is made).

*The Need For Utopian Visions of Sport*

In summary so far, I have suggested that the institutionalized nature of sport is inherently conservative. This is not immediately significant, but becomes so when it is questioned in terms of the reasons for its maintenance. Science readily admits the naivety of deducing theory from observational fact alone. Similarly, in ethical considerations value cannot be immediately prescribed from a description of what *is* valued. Assessing the implications of our values and helping us to understand their influence is the major purpose of hypothetical speculation. Determining a common future is as important as identifying a common past.

Although there have been futuristic visions of sport, the majority of these have been fictitious accounts or minor extrapolations based on changes taking place at the moment. Few of these have made ethical judgements on the place of sport in the future. The one exception is

Bernard Suits' *The Grasshopper: Games, Life, and Utopia*, which takes its place amongst the 'classical' tradition. With respect to these ('classical') utopian visions, Judith Sklar indicates the importance of establishing an Ideal with which to make comparisons,

> For them, utopia was a model, an ideal pattern that invited contemplation and judgement but did not entail any other activity. It is a perfection that the mind's eye recognizes as true and which is described as such, and so serves as a standard of moral judgement.[13]

We have, in a way, suggested such ideal patterns in our assumption of a system of fair play and the establishment of the essence of game-playing.

A distinguishing factor separating a utopian scheme from a futuristic projection is the description of all the major social arrangements that are thought necessary in the ideal or desired situation. The depiction of a utopian sportsworld would require more than just a fictitious construction or reconstruction of one or two components within the institution. Some comparisons need to be made between how classical and modern utopias attempt to do this, and between the utopias themselves and sporting activities.

## Perfection and Progress: Two Modes of Utopian Thought

We can identify two very distinct traditions in utopian literature: the classical and the modern. Whether the utopian author presents an ideal image as a standard of judgement (the 'classical' view), or a realizable and temporal world as a critique of the present (the 'modern' view), the corollary attached to both is that change is desirable. The former encompasses works from Plato's *Republic* to Thomas More's *Utopia*. Both traditions can be contrasted with respect to their methods of presenting ideals.

### *Classical Utopias: Ideals and Aims*

The most important singular aspect of the classical utopian ideal is that its existence does not depend on the possibility of realization. In consequence of arising from Platonic

realism, classical utopias are expressions of ideal Forms. They exemplify absolute truths concerning the essence of concepts, such as 'justice' or 'fairness'. The author attempts to present a picture of how one's ideals would work in practice. They are metaphorical or analogous models, too often judged according to their feasability. The society depicted is a visual image of a reality that transcends the temporality of the phenomenal world. Just as in geometry one might consider the characteristics of a circle and then test whether the drawing is in fact a circle, the classical utopian presents an abstract verbal construction in order that society may be compared to the perfect Form.

Classical utopias are objects of contemplation rather than goals for attainment. Suits' grasshopper expresses such a view, ". . . that my way of life may eventually be vindicated in practice is, now that I think of it, really beside the point. Rather, it is the logic of my position which is at issue."[13]The world version constructed by the classical utopian is predominantly essentialistic (as discussed in chapter 3). The rejection of time is reflected in the doctrine of essence preceeding existence. Particulars (contemporary social arrangements in this case) are images of the Universal (the Form, or utopian ideal). Thus, the Form is contained within the particular: they coexist in space and time.

Although the Grasshopper believes in the ultimate Truth of his metaphysic of leisure, he is not concerned that most people will never become more than "asshoppers" or "grants". The value of his argument is in the greater understanding that Skepticus and Prudence gain from the picture that he presents. The comparisons with Socrates demonstrating to Glaucon and Adeimantus the nature of justice and the Good from which it is derived is undeniably apparent.

The classical utopia is consequently addressed to individuals in society and only secondarily concerned with whether the advocated arrangements ever come into being. This view is particularly applicable to our discussion of deontological ethics. The idea of moral agency makes it imperative that the individual act according to a binding duty, that only each individual can choose. Thus, the classical utopia is directed towards our own actions (albeit that they

should be universalizable). In contrast, the modern utopia seeks the establishment of a desired state of affairs. Interestingly, many deontological theories have been founded on religious doctrines that are mainly concerned with personal choice and action. The life and death of the Grasshopper takes on biblical connotations when he declares that his death is for 'humanity',

> I am not here to persuade you to die for my principles, but to persuade you that *I* must. We ought to be quite clear about our respective roles. You are not here to die for me, but I for you.
> . . . evidently I was put on earth just to play out my life and die, and it would be impious of me to go against my destiny. That is, if you like, the theology of the case.[14]

As in the death of Jesus Christ, indifference and even antagonism are inevitable: it is enough if one individual changes because of a belief in the absolute Truth of the "right way to live".

The classical utopian ideal expresses perfection rather than advancement, structural change, or development. Thus in sport, we should strive to make our games as representative of the ideal forms of fairness and game-playing as possible. So, play that detracts from these ideal forms "destroys the nature of the game". The process of utopian thought is consequently an examination of the nature of society, or components of that society. Thus, attempts at defining play, games and sport are not lexicographic demands for exact description of a word, or taxonomies of a word's usage, but quests for the *meaning* of the activity which is being defined. This is undoubtedly an exploration of an ultimate truth in classical utopian tradition. Essentialist definitions of games, such as Esposito's, can then become standards of judgement for assessing games in society.[15]The need to determine what a game is must precede the judgement of the quality of a particular game in practice.[16]

Other than Suits' book, there have not been any major schemes projecting a utopian sports/games world. There are however numerous depictions of the way sport should be; often contained in texts outside of Physical Education. One example that is worthwhile examining parallels More's *Utopia*. In *Tales of a Dalai Lama*, co-operative games are used to metaphorically represent the ideal society in which individuals compete with each other against the opposition of nature, rather than attempt to excel at one another's expense.

> "I don't understand," said the Dalai Lama. "Why should anyone be playing against anyone else? Everyone tries to keep the ball in the air. That's all there is to it. When the ball hits the ground, it's a sad moment for everyone and you'll notice how they take a moment to console the person responsible."
>
> He and the Swedish professor of philosophy were watching a game of ball, and the professor was confused since nobody seemed to be playing against anyone else. Everybody wore the same colour uniform as the ball was batted back and forth over a net. "In our country," he tried to explain to the king, "we divide into opposing sides and then we try to make the others miss the ball."
>
> The Dalai Lama found this quite distressing. "But the the ball must hit the ground all the time."
>
> "Your Highness. Why are you weeping?"
>
> "Such a way to play with the human spirit," sobbed the boy. Deeply shaken, he went to his room to pray.
>
> Seated alone on the roof of the Potala, watching the game through field glasses, the Swedish professor was transported back to his classroom. He saw the students batting an idea across the aisle between the chairs and the podium. He saw himself ruthlessly knocking it to the ground. He saw himself launching a philosophical concept. He saw his students doing their best to oppose it, while they passed contemptuous glances and bided their time until the flaw in his scholarship would be exposed and his position overthrown. The professor longed for a change of rules so that all together they might keep ideas in the air until the human spirit could take flight. . . . Ashamed, he left the palace with but one desire: to get back to Sweden and change the rules of the game.[17]

Despite the satirical nature of More's *Utopia*, the comparisons are evident. More portrays an ideal society existing in *ou-topos* (Gr. "nowhere") in concession to its oblique, unreal, and almost fanciful contrasts with contemporary Europe. Again, it is an ideal Form which aims at provoking thought, but not necessarily action, in the individual. More suggests himself that *Utopia*, "is a fiction whereby the truth, as if smeared with honey, might a little more pleasantly slide into men's minds."[18]More's concept of pleasure in utopia is as Idealistic as Plato's concept of justice, and the ideology of utopian thinking must be considered. For the moment it is interesting to draw comparisons between the Dalai Lama's and More's views of pride. Both conceptions of utopia resent the 'unnatural' desire to artificially distinguish ourselves from others by means of personal triumph. When More talks about "possession" he could so easily be discussing performance in sport that is measured by one person's/team's defeat of another,

> . . . avarice and greed are aroused in every kind of living creature by the fear of want, but only in man are they motivated by pride alone – pride

> which counts it a personal glory to excel others by superfluous display of possession. The latter vice can have no place at all in the Utopian scheme of things.[19]

It would be interesting to see how many people choose to run, ski, play golf or climb mountains because they did not enjoy the highly competitive environment of organized team games at school. Yet, we persist in associating 'sport' with these games and often ask whether mountaineering is a game or back-packing is a sport.

*Modern Utopias: Change and Development*

If the classical utopia upholds perfection as an Ideal to be used as a yardstick for measuring contemporary society, then, the modern utopia explores the processes of change and development. Elizabeth Hansot states that,

> . . . the distinction could be seen to be between ideals that have an ontological standing considered to be objective and determinate, corresponding to the requirements of man's nature but not created by him (classical), and ideals that have an ontological standing considered to be subjective and indeterminate, not required by man's nature, but created by him and able in turn to change his nature (modern).[20]

The modern utopia does exist in time and space; not as a static end to the path of progress, but as a persuasive image of a value system fully realized. The modern utopia accepts the bias of such a system. The finished item, the "cake", is an attainable product with a "recipe" for its achievement. Such a vision is a sample to help the reader determine whether such a utopia is desirable. To continue the analogy, the dystopian picture dissuades society from continuing with a "recipe" that is predicted will lead to a "distasteful" world.

Modern utopias aim primarily at changing the present arrangements of society by altering the institutions and not, directly, the individuals. An important consideration in many utopias is that change is not inevitable: humanity will only become better if there is a deliberate attempt to change the present social arrangements in accordance with the projection laid out in utopia. In such utopias, transcendance is placed in the temporality of progress and not in the contemplation of perfection. Carl Becker describes the modern utopian mind as,

> . . . the disposition and the determination to regard ideas and concepts, the truth of things as the things themselves, as changing entities, the character and significance of which at any given time can be fully grasped only by regarding them as points in an endless process of differentiation, of unfolding. . .[31]

The importance of the final utopian vision only takes on meaning in terms of the preutopian and now resolved inequalities. That is, rather than uphold the ideal and ahistorical, it must have a historical context to express the development from what is now to what should be. It is an action-oriented approach, as displayed by Jean Bodin,

> Not that we intend to describe a purely ideal and unrealizable commonwealth such as that imagined by Plato, or Thomas More the Chancellor of England. We intend to confine ourselves as far as possible to those political forms that are practicable.[32]

The basis of these realizable political forms evolved out of a tendency to treat history and society as subject to determinate laws of causality. The understanding of history was believed to provide knowledge of progress by lessons of example. As a result history was seen to defend the present as superior to the past owing to the inevitable development of science. Similarly to the incremental way in which science builds upon itself, history was seen as following the same causal laws. It identified positive contributions to the way things were at the time, highlighting the influences on society that shaped what the contemporary world was. The inventors and physicists were upheld as benefactors.

Sport can also be viewed as if the characters and periods that emerge in the history of sport exemplify some teleological advancement towards the present. That is, the past can be traced up to the present by studying the evolution of sport as it is today. The result is the acceptance of such a pattern of arithmetric or geometric progression as the inevitable way in which history is made and the future shaped. Unlike the growth of scientific knowledge, the identification of how sport has evolved does not qualify why it should be so. For example, the descriptive illustration of sporting heroes of the past offers justification for idolatry of heroes in the present, without questioning the value system; class, race, and sex structure that built up such

exemplary figures.

Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* depicts a view of the future whereby the desire for scientific knowledge is seen to lead to progress. The job of scientific discovery takes place separately from everyday society in the so-called "House of Salomon". Once what is accountable for progress is established, its production is maximized. The discipline of Physical Education is set up to promote knowledge of an already existing phenomenon, and likewise exists independently of the society (sportsworld) itself. Yet, neither Bacon's "House of Salomon", nor the discipline of Physical Education concentrate on the state of the existing social arrangements with an aim to commenting on or changing them. In both cases, what is forgotten is that knowledge obtained must be meaningful to the way in which society should function.

The separation of science as an independent and autonomous enterprise foreshadowed the division of labour as a means of maximizing efficiency. Adam Smith's *Wealth Of Nations* describes a society in which maximum productivity is identified as attributable to the propensity in human nature to accumulate wealth. This is seen as an inevitable objective because the production of certain goods enables bartering in order to obtain other needs. The harsh reality of economics is not explained with a coincidental morality of such a system. Despite Smith's capitalist ideology, the division of labour is also expressed in many socialist utopias in realization of the dictum, "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs."

In sport the division of labour is obvious, particularly so in North America's most popular sports: baseball, football, basketball, and ice hockey. How much does such a view of optimum efficiency owe to the way society has developed since the Industrial Revolution? Coaching methods, physiological research, and psychological testing perpetrate the technological ethic on the naturalistic fallacy that this is how football is so this is what ought to be developed.

The sociology of sport so often uses examples from the institutionalized games without noticing the increasing demand for and participation in completely contrasting leisure sports. The activities that come under the umbrella of "outdoor pursuits" in particular avoid the bureaucratization and rationalization of the institutionalized games. Such activities require all

round ability and not immediate specialization. They do not undertake direct competition with others and in most cases do not require subordination of the individual desire to the team's needs. This last point is not to say that the altruistic nature of team co-operation is not valuable. It is more of a comment on the use of sporting success to uphold nationalistic pride.

Anthropologists and psychologists have long been identifying the presence of playful instincts in all societies and all human beings. They have not found all societies developing games and sports. In Britain, swimming is the single most popular physical leisure activity. This is not reflected in the numbers that pursue swimming as a competitive sport.

By the 19th. century, when the Industrial Revolution had made most of Bacon's vision almost a way of life, utopians began to reject the ideas of social planning belonging to the philosopher-king of Plato's *Republic* or the scientist technician of the *New Atlantis*. Robert Owen's *A New View Of Society* placed the oganization of utopia into the hands of the businessman-technician. By the time of William Morris' *News From Nowhere* (1890) the industrial machine had become the symbol of destruction of the individual's enhancement of happiness and appreciation of human life. His utopia extols a society where work is not motivated by profit, where play does not demand the result of success or failure. Morris values the spontaneity of a decentralized institution (play) rather than the restriction of an ordered and complex system (sport). At the end of the 19th. century, utopian authors began to realize that social and moral improvement does not inevitably arise from cosmic evolution.

**Utopia and Dystopia (Some Conclusions)**

In order to project a utopian vision the author must assess the valuable aspects of the present society. As we have seen, this is done by comparing the particular with the Ideal, or by illustrating a hypothetical development of the author's values in a fully realized state. Not all utopias have been depictions of places. Some have stressed psychic states of mind. Perhaps it is as the Dalai Lama suggests, "the aim of the game, as of all life, is to assist in one another's

release to higher levels of consciousness".[23] In chapter 2, we mentioned the rise in research associating the sport-induced 'high' with the same endorphins and opiates in action with hallucinogenic drugs. For the Eastern philosophies, utopia is an altered consciousness and not a physical place. Enlightenment is associated with the state of ego-lessness so often experienced by drug-takers and 'sport-addicts'. For these people, utopia is on our doorstep.

Not all utopian visions of the future have professed the "right way to live". Many have warned against the dangers of pursuing certain paths of progress. Most utopias present dilemnas of egoistic and altruistic desires, personal and social identity. There is the conflict of free will against the behaviourally determined ideal world. All utopian authors have had their critical counterparts, but this has not stopped the opposers from offering their own alternatives. For example, Aristotle proferred his own utopian ideals in his *Politics* after criticizing the city-state of his teacher (Plato). Some authors, such as H. G. Wells and Aldous Huxley have been both utopians and dystopians. The 20th. century has become significant in the history of utopian literature for its diversity and quantity of both utopian and dystopian views.

Utopian schemes have still continued to criticize contemporary society. Visions of peace and plenty, as well as intellectual and emotional freedom have arisen through awareness of the restriction of these values in present arrangements. Yet a different antagonism has faced twentieth century humanity: the increasing difficulty in achieving self awareness in a more and more compex and impersonal society. Both Aldous Huxley's *Island* and Herbert Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* are concerned with the individual's self awareness. Both resent the dulling, energy absorbing, and repetitive mechanisms of technological society. In contrast, it has been suggested that sport can be used to increase mental and bodily awareness through the enhancement of self-esteem and personal identity.[24]

In the 19th. century Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* (an anogram of "nowhere") reminded the reader of the alarmingly rapid development of machines in relation to the development of humanity. It warned of the danger of being reduced to the function of a machine. In the sense of Bacon's scientific, technological, computerized future we are nearer to utopia than ever. But

contemporary utopians have become wary of the Promethean theme of power without constraint, and "horror" stories such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* have been taken as warnings of possible disasters connected with man-made machines.

The Baconian belief that knowledge is power through invention, discovery and control is analagous to the present day "Mr. Universe". Increased scientific knowledge has enabled the bodybuilder to construct, shape and form his or her own body to its peak of development and beyond. The power is invested in the individual to totally dictate and control his or her own immediate environment without questioning the need for such a process. The athlete becomes the instrument of the muscle physiologist. Similarly, when expeditions undertake to climb Mt. Everest, who achieves success when reaching the top? Is it the climber or the equipment manufacturer? The athlete becomes the embodiment of the scientist: the sprinter - symbol of the explosive muscle. The idea of the institution overrunning the individual is insinuated in Arthur C. Clarke's *2001: A Space Odyssey* where the technicians remain nameless but the computer is called "HAL".

Soccer players used to belong to positions on the field that were identifiable by the number on their shirts: the no. 2 shirt always signified the right full-back, the no. 12 was always the substitute. Now, in international competition players belong to a squad. Player "X" wears shirt "17" regardless of the position being played or whether the player is even picked for the game. The team, and formations invariably change but player "X" remains "17". It is a symbol of who the player is, no longer of the position.

Zamiatin's *We* (1920) is an indictment of a dehumanized Soviet society, written in an appeal for a self-critical, revolutionary consciousness. It was an immediate influence on George Orwell's *1984*. Such works have been paralleled from an academic standpoint by Herbert Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man* and Theodore Roszak's *The Making Of A Counter Culture*, and all see the scientific world as closed to other perspectives, exclusive in their rationality and dominating human behavior according to the logic of a materialistic and mechanistic way of life. But as we argued in chapter 2, our world versions should not be closed to others. There must be

a plurality of sportsworlds if we are to avoid this monopoly on 'reality'.

Finally, there are those utopias and dystopias that picture manipulation of the most subjective variable – the human consciousness – through behavioristic policies, for example B. F. Skinner's fictitious world *Walden Two* and its theoretical compliment, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*. Within sport, psychology attempts to control that last variable by determining states and traits and overcoming "negative" functions. The end product is a predictable, automaton athlete. The components that make up a good performer become so standardized that competitions could become computerized, as they already have been in comparing boxers of different eras and winning horses of the Epsom Derby.

Earlier, we argued that we must proffer some judgement on the quality of sport as it *is*. It is ironic that games attempt to make the extrinsic components as equal as possible so that the performers can compete and thus demonstrate their inequalities. The concern for scientific advancement in sport without commitment to ethical concerns for the value of sport is effectively self-defeating. The ultimate end is the elimination of the "interplay between possibility and actuality". The encounter moves beyond the thresholds of tension that keep the game enjoyable to play and to watch.

*In Summary*

In conclusion we must admit that all utopian schemes express the ideological commitment of the authors. The point of this discussion has been to compare the need for making ethical and moral judgements in utopian thought with such a need in our study of sport. Utopian visions do not solve differences about value preferences but they do question value awareness. We saw that this was not the case with the amoral view of conduct in sport and in our teaching of games without the teaching of 'fair play'.

Karl Popper challenges utopian schemes because of their demand for a planned, closed, and finished society rather than taking into account the facts of conflict and change required for a progressive and open world.[25] We have not envisaged a utopian sportsworld, here. Instead, we have discussed a variety of views and ideas, all of which demand our attention and

consideration. However, I *have* argued that the institution of sport perpetrates a static and value laden structure that requires critical judgement.

Seldom in the course of our discussions have we tried to establish such a 'closed' system. I have not used these 'problems' to present the way things are, but simply explain what they might be. My goal has been one of gaining insight into and understanding of the world of play, games and sport. It might be that this understanding alters our ideas and prompts us to change our world. We need to reflect on our world and look to what we want it to be. Utopian speculation necessarily emphasizes change in the present. Moreover, it demands that the nature of sport be examined not for what it has become through history, but for why it has become so and what it should be. As Liebniz aptly states, "the present is pregnant with the future".

## NOTES

**Subjectivity and Objectivity:**

1 Nowhere do I define what I mean by a 'problem'. I believe that this matter is tackled for me in each of the chapters, by demonstration. But, if this does not satisfy then, at the beginning of chapter 5 (subsection: 'Is Understanding My Death A Problem') I briefly mention how I am using this term.

2 This does not deny that the players are necessary elements in the game.

3 I am referring to the peg-board game where one has to remove all the pegs bar one from the board in a given manner.

4 Huizinga, J., *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1950) pp.10–11.

5 Ingham, A. G., and Loy, J. W., 'The Social System of Sport: A Humanistic Perspective', *QUEST*, 1973 (Fall), XIX, p.12.

6 Vernes, J. R., 'The Element of Time in Competitive Games', *Diogenes*, 1965, September, p.25.

7 Some exceptions would be if we are dreaming or if we are suffering from hallucinations.

8 Hampshire, S., *Thought and Action* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1959) p.40.

9 This problem is examined in detail in chapter 3.

10 In the next chapter we will discuss the possibility of a world *un*perceived. This possibility is not in question here. The objective account might simply hope to establish something of a conditional clause: *If* such and such an object is observed, *then* it will be seen to be thus. Clearly, this does not entail any attempt to describe an object without describing how *we* see it. Such attempts are sometimes made though.

11 See the section on facts and values in chapter 7: 'The Possibility of Ethical Knowledge'.

12 Nagel, T., *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) p.209.

13 Cf., Lejewski, C., 'Ontology and Logic', in S. Korner (ed.), *Philosophy of Logic* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1976) pp.4–5.

14 See 'The Function of Moral Language' in chapter 7.

15 Mead, G. H., *Mind, Self and Society* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1934) pp.158–59.

16 This problem is taken up in chapter 5: 'My Death'.

17 Chapter 4 discusses in detail the different outlooks that are mentioned here.

18 This is the case even if we try to justify life as part of God's plan. But obviously there will be some people who refuse to accept reason.

19 This very complicated topic is sometimes known as the problem of 'Other Minds'. We will discuss, very briefly, in chapter 6 ('What Is A Person?') the use of analogy to infer that other beings sharing the same characteristics must also be sharing exactly similar experiences.

20 There are far more problems with a reductionist account of reality that we will consider in the next chapter.

21 'Mortal Questions', op.cit., p.212.

22 Ibid., pp.210–211.

23 See chapter 6.

**Frames of Reference:**

1 Nozick, R., *Philosophical Explanations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981) p.630

2 Ibid., p.627.

3 Roberts, J. M., Arth, M. J. and Bush, R. R., 'Games in Culture', *American Anthropologist*, 1959, 61, p.597.

4 See in particular: Loy, J. W., 'The Cultural System of Sport', *Quest*, 1978 (January), XXIX, 73–102, and his earlier 'The Nature of Sport: A Definitional Effort', *Quest*, 1968 (May), X, 1–15.

5 'Monopolistic materialism', 'physicalism', 'scientism', etc. are simply names for the view that science tells us (and is the only thing that can tell us) everything there is to know about reality.

6 The empiricist criterion of meaning originally depended on the verifiability theory of synthetic statements: 'a sentence has empirical meaning if and only if it is possible to indicate a finite set of observation sentences $O1, O2, \ldots On$, such that if these are true then $S$ is necessarily true also.' Karl Popper later introduced the falsifiability theory that, 'a sentence has empirical meaning if and only if its denial is not analytic and follows logically from some finite logically consistent class of observation sentences.' Both theories have since been repudiated, often by their original exponents (Carl Hempel, for example).

7 Locke, J., 'A Third Letter for Toleration (1692)', *Works*, Vol.6, 10th. ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1801) p.144.

8 See in particular A. J. Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic* in which he holds that ethical statements are neither true nor false but merely expressions of personal preferences. Thus, they are merely disguised imperatives or ejaculations. C. L. Stevenson presents a similar 'emotive' theory, "as a working model, you might regard 'this is good' as meaning 'I approve of this; do so too' – for in saying that something is good one means, partly, that one approves of it and, partly,

that one wants one's hearers to approve of it as well." (*Ethics and Language*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1944. p.21.) Consequently, ethical statements, owing to their not being reducible to factual statements, do not have any cognitive meaning at all.

9 Polanyi, M., 'The Nature of Scientific Convictions', in *Scientific Thought and Social Reality: Essays by Michael Polanyi*, edited by F. Schwartz. Collected as Monograph 32 of *Psychological Issues*, 1972, Vol.VII No.4, pp.49–50.

10 There are many instances in children's books or cartoons where qualities are personified, because we are unable to grasp conceptually what a reduction of these qualities would be. For example, one's good intentions are represented by an angel whispering in one ear whilst one's bad intentions are shown by a devil whispering into the other. Similarly, tooth decay is depicted as little characters with pick axes attacking our teeth.

11 Much of Democritus' work has not survived and the fullest account of the atomic theory is contained in Lucretius' poem *De Rerum Natura* ('On the Nature of Things') which in itself is based on the work of Epicurus. Although it is common to regard this ancient atomism as metaphysical speculation (in contrast to the atomic theory of modern science) it was definitely an important step the foundation of empirical scientific method.

12 See Chapter 1: Heidegger, M., *Introduction to Metaphysics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959).

13 Hanson, N. R., *Patterns of Discovery* (Cambridge University Press, 1958), Chapter 1 and throughout.

14 Goodman, N., *Ways of Worldmaking* (Hassocks, Sussex: Harvester Press, 1978) p.100.

15 Allen, W., 'My Philosophy', Chapter 4 of *Getting Even* (1966). Also used by Goodman to make the same point that, "never mind mind, essence is not essential, and matter doesn't matter." ('Ways of Worldmaking', p. 96.)

16 'Ways of Worldmaking', p.4.

17 Ibid., p.94.

18 Wallace, W. L., *The Logic of Science in Sociology* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1971) p.11, emphasis mine.

19 Ibid., p.11–13.

20 Wallace constantly refers to Popper. (See footnote earlier)

21 Ibid., p.14.

22 'Ways of Worldmaking', p.15.

23 These points and the following quote by Fee are taken from Hall, M. A., 'The Player, the Woman, and the Necessity of Feminist Scholarship.' *Proceedings of the National Association of Physical Education in Higher Education*, Annual Conference, San Diego, California, Jan 8–10, 1982, Volume III, Human Kinetics Publishers, 1982, pp.48–55.

24 Fee, E., 'Is Feminism a Threat to Scientific Objectivity?' *International Journal of Women's Studies*, 1981, 4, p.381.

25 Willis, P., 'Women In Sport' *Working Papers In Cultural Studies*, (University of Birmingham: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies) Spring 1974, 5, p.21.

26 I am using the distinction made by David Best between "purposive" and "aesthetic" sports. See: Best, D., 'The Aesthetic In Sport', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 1974, 14, 197–213. This article is reproduced in: Gerber, E. W. and Morgan, W. J., *Sport and the Body: A Philosophical Symposium*, 2nd. ed. (Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger, 1979) pp.345–54. It is also expanded upon by Best in Chapter 7 of his: *Philosophy and Human Movement* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978).

27 Dyson, G., *The Mechanics of Athletics*, 7th. ed. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1977) pp.183–4. 1st. published in 1962.

28 'Women In Sport', p.25.

29 Marx, K., *Grundisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy* (London: Harmondsworth Press, 1973) p.94.

30 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, 'The German Ideology', in Tucker, R. C., ed. *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 1st. ed. (New York: Norton, 1972) p.119.

31 Ibid., p.114.

32 Marx, K., *Capital*, Vol. 1. (New York: International Publishers, 1967) p.177.

33 Sartre, J. P., *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library Inc., 1956). This passage appears in the often neglected section on 'Existential Psychoanalysis'. It is reprinted under the title 'Play and Sport' in Gerber, E. W. and Morgan, W. J., *Sport and the Body: A Philosophical Symposium*, pp.84–87. The passage cited is on page 87.

34 Balbus, I., *Marxism and Domination* (Princeton University Press, 1982) p.7. Balbus subtitles his book, 'A Neo-Hegelian, Feminist, Psychoanalytic Theory of Sexual, Political, and Technological Liberation.

35 Hegel, G. W. F., *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Barrie (New York: Harper & Row, 1967) pp.579–98.

36 'Marxism and Domination', p.12.

37 Ibid., p.13.

38 'Philosophical Explanations', pp.19–20. Nozick speculates that the profusion of books on Eastern philosophy that began to appear in bookstores in the sixties might be associated with a more widespread experimentation with drugs, "People were turning to the books as fitting and explaining what they suddenly were experiencing unpreparedly." p.20ff.

39 Egger, T., *The Sport Drug* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1981) p.99.

40 'The Aesthetic In Sport', p.348.

41 Pirsig, R. M., *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (New York: William Morrow, 1974) chapter 19, author's emphsis.

42 'The Sport Drug', p.58.

43 Roszak, T., *The Making of a Counter Culture* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970)

44 'The Sport Drug', p.64.

45 James, W., *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Mentor Books, 1958). See Egger: p.64.

46 'Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance', p.225.

**The Problem of Universals:**

1 Paddick, R. J., 'Review Essay of "The Grasshopper: Games, Life and Utopia" by Bernard Suits', *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, 1979, VI, p.75.

2 Staniland, H., *Universals* (New York: Anchor, 1972) p.73.

3 In the next chapter, we will consider the possibility of defining one's life, such that if I give my life meaning as being a skier then should I cease to be a skier, I also cease to be.

4 Plato, 'Meno', in *The Dialogues of Plato*, translated by B. Jowett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953) 72c.

5 Wittgenstein, L., *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953) #66.

6 See: McBride, F., 'A Critique of Mr. Suits' Definition of Game Playing', *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, 1979, VI, 59–65.

7 Wittgenstein's theory of *family resemblances*, which resulted from his own advice, is one attempt to solve this problem: we will return to it later.

8 Aaron, R. I., *The Theory of Universals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967) p.vii.

9 Russell, B., *The Problems of Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967) p.53.

10 Show me an instance of 'whiteness' without showing me a white thing. Even if you show me white light, it is still a white something.

11 Quine, W. V. O., 'On What There Is', in *From a Logical Point of View* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1953) p.10.

12 The following examples are based on Chapter 4 (General Terms), of Hilary Staniland's book: *Universals*, op.cit., pp.68–83.

13 The result of this distinction might be as follows: all games share common properties or qualities – a definition of game playing will identify those properties that determine something to be a game or not be a game; if activities are called games simply because they resemble each other, it could be we can find resemblances between A and B, between B and C, and between C and D, but A and D are so far removed that cannot see any resemblance.

14 See the chapter, 'Common Qualities', in R. I. Aaron's *The Theory of Universals*.

15 'The Problems of Philosophy', op.cit., p.55.

16 The idea of a nominal essence stems from Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. The difference between the nominal essence and the real essence is that the former is made by the mind. Essences are fabrications created by abstracting a core of common qualities from many particulars. The important point is that although the content of the nominal essence is gained from experience, the drawing of the final boundaries is a mental act, "I do not deny but nature, in the constant production of particular beings, makes them not always new and various, but very much alike and of kin to one another: but I think it nevertheless true, that the boundaries of the species, whereby men sort them, are made by men". (A. C. Fraser edition, New York: Dover Publications, 1959) III, vi, 37 (p.87).

17 Bambrough, R., 'Universals and Family Resemblances', *Proceedings of The Aristotelian Society*, 1960–61, LXI. Cf., Landesman, C. (ed.), *The Problem of Universals* (New York: Basic Books, 1971) p.127.

18 Many of the arguments must be ignored here, however. We will just focus on several issues that arise concerning the consideration of universals as properties.

19 All sports are games, all games are play.

20 Goodman, N., 'A World of Universals', in *The Problem of Universals* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956) pp.13–32.

21 Aristotle, 'Categoriae', Chap5: 2a 11–18, in R. McKeon (ed.) *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941).

22 Ibid., Chap2: 1a20–1b40.

23 Strawson, P., *Individuals* (London: Methuen, 1959).

24 Ibid., pp.186–187.

25 This section is based on the article by R. B. Brandt, 'The Languages of Realism and Nominalism', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 1957, XVII, 516–535.

26 See McBride's articles on the non-definition of sport and his reply to Suits for a clear discussion of the tests for narrowness and broadness.

27 It is important to note though, that, English is a realist language. Hence, it is not justification for a realist language that this is how things actually work in English.

28 We can limit this to the Aristotelean condition of admitting names only to those predicates which have instances, instead of the Platonic idea of giving a name for every predicate.

29 I mention Suits in this context because the most recent criticisms of attempts at defining games have been prompted by his definition. This is given 3 pages further on, in the section 'Meaning as a semantic relation' of chapter 4.

**Life, the Meaning of:**

1 See: Nozick, R., *Philosophical Explanations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981) pp.574–575.

2 Tolstoy, L. N., *A Confession* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940) p.50.

3 I am using the term 'teleological' in its simple sense of refering to the 'end' of a process. That is, an action has a teleological purpose if it is a means towards that end.

4 If justification is based on teleological purpose, a problem arises as to how the end goal is itself justified without having a further end to which it is striving. We will come back to this several times throughout this discussion.

5 This is also closely related to the idea of meaning as purpose.

6 Of course, if we can not find any reasons why anything should matter then this fact also does not matter.

7 Some points related to this are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6: 'What Is A Person?'

8 Suits, B., *The Grasshopper: Games, Life and Utopia* (Toronto: Toronto University of Toronto Press, 1979). Suits presents his argument more specifically in his earlier paper, 'Is Life A Game We Are Playing?', *Ethics*, 1967, Vol.77:No.3, 209–213.

9 Suits, B., 'What Is A Game?', *Philosophy of Science*, 1967 (June), 34, p.148.

10 This might be the case if we deny any teleological purpose to life, just as we might deny that games are undertaken for the goal itself (in Suits' view). If the choice of less efficient means is a necessary condition of game playing, then games must be 'means' orientated. Whereas, if games are concerned with the end purpose in-itself then, by their very nature, they present a paradox: trying to achieve a desired state of affairs and at the same time presenting oneself with obstacles that prevent one from reaching that goal as efficiently as possible. See: 'The Grasshopper', op.cit., pp.38–40.

11 'Is Life A Game We Are Playing?', op.cit., p.212.

12 I am not commiting the *gambler's fallacy* of suggesting that three flips of a coin with the result of three 'heads' renders it more probable that the next flip will be a tail, but simply invoking the law of parsimony.

13 We will examine the supposed *absurdity* of life in a short while.

14 My main purpose in this chapter is to dig deeper into the common assumptions underneath the general view that play and games are somehow less valuable than other (more functional?) activities. I believe that the 'trivialization' of play, games and sport is due to our normal, unquestioned, conceptions of significance and importance, which are related to the idea that life has some sort of teleological purpose or objective meaningfulness.

15 See: Edwards, P., 'Life, Meaning and Value of', *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: MacMillan, 1967) Vol.4, pp.469–470.

16 Rather, it can only be the inevitability of our death that is a bad thing. I do not see how death itself can be bad when it is not a state of existence in which we can suffer this badness. This consideration is taken up in the next chapter (5: 'My Death').

17 This does not imply that death from old age is an insignificant loss. We generally concede that it is worse to die at a young age than after a 'full' life, but still believe that it is a terrible thing to die, period.

18 Nagel, T., *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1979) p.10.

19 However, it would be counter-intuitive to presuppose that an immortal being could not also be human.

20 Frankl, V., *The Doctor and the Soul* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1957) p.73. Cf., Robert Nozick, op.cit., p.579.

21 Cf., Olsen, R. G., 'Death', in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, op.cit., p.308. I certainly would not mind death if I thought I was going to wake up the next day. Similarly, I would hesitate to go to sleep if I thought that it was terminal.

22 'The Doctor and the Soul', loc.cit.

23 'Philosophical Explanations', op.cit., *ff*p.579.

24 Mick Burke got left behind by Pete Boardman and Sherpa Pertemba on the final stage of their summit attempt. When Boardman and Pertemba returned they met Burke on his way to the summit alone, in bad weather. He was never seen again. We can only speculate whether he made it to the top or not.

25 The two might be combined of course: parents might gain immortality through a child, who might be childless but gain immortality by leaving an impression on the world. Is this the case with Terry Fox's parents?

26 'Mortal Questions', op.cit., p.14.

27 This is assuming that we find absurdity nauseous enough to do something about it. However, the arguments we looked at earlier to deny that we must give an objective account of meaning can be applied here also. If it does not matter that from an objective point of view life has no meaning, then it does not matter if from an objective point of view life is absurd. Nevertheless, it is inconsistent to try and view life as meaningful from an objective point of view and then deny that such a point of view matters in consideration of our absurdity.

28 Camus suggests that this would finally lead to suicide.

29 If it is 'worthwhile', we are led into a tautology.

30 Camus, A., *The Myth of Sisyphus* (New York: Vintage, 1959) p.90.

**My Death:**

1 Heidegger, M., *Being and Time* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962) p.239.

2 Taylor, R., *Metaphysics*, 2nd ed. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1974) p.123.

3 For reference to this and other claims mentioned here, see: Olsen, R. G., 'Death', in P. Edwards (ed.) *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1967) Vol.2, pp.307-9.

4 I am loosely basing this on Wittgenstein's idea of a 'problem'.

5 Herman Tennessen calls the 'sedatives' of work and other pastimes, "eschatological hebetants".

They dull or blunt our awareness of the finitude of life (necessary if we are to come to terms with our "cosmic situation"). See: Tennessen, H., 'Happiness is For the Pigs', *Journal of Existentialism*, Winter 1966/67, Vol.VII: 26, p.185.

6 'Death' (The Encyclopedia of Philosophy), op.cit., p.308. This quote is attributed to Epicureas himself in a letter to Menoeceus.

7 Wittgenstein, L., *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961) Pears and McGuiness trans., followed by sentence number: 6.4311.

8 Cf., Edwards, P., 'My Death' in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, op.cit., Vol.5, pp.416-19.

9 Schlick, M., 'Meaning and Verification', *The Philosophical Review*, 1936 (July), Vol.45: No.268, p.356.

10 Wisdom, J., *Other Minds* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1952) p.36.

11 We will discuss, in chapter 6, the mind-body dualism and what it is to be a person. For the moment, we will accept that if 'I' am witnessing the funeral (whether 'I' be soul or body, both or neither), then the corpse in the coffin is not 'me'.

12 Flew, A., *The Presumption of Atheism* (London: Pemberton, 1976) p.126. The chapter, 'Can A Man Witness His Own Funeral', in Flew's book (often referenced to the now defunct *Hibbert Journal*, 1956), dicusses the arguments of Schlick and Wisdom.

13 'Tractatus', op.cit., 6.1411. Obviously the world itself does not cease in death, but only *my* world. Although this is not overly clear, I assume this is what Wittgenstein is saying.

14 Koestenbaum, P. 'The Vitality of Death', *Journal of Existentialism*, 1964, Vol.5, pp.141-42.

15 Ibid., p.144.

16 All translations are from the Macquarrie and Robinson edition of Heidegger's *Being and Time*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).

17 Too often in studies of self-awareness through 'danger' sports the emphasis has been on the supposedly causal relationship between the "fear of death" and the "desire to live". A reason for the exposure to danger is explained as a stimulation of one's desire to live. The relationship can be expressed as follows: (1) Facing death makes one more aware of life. (2) Mountaineers, or whoever, face death. Therefore, (3) Mountaineers are made more aware of life. Steps (1) and (2) can both be falsified, but more importantly, the whole approach is wrong in considering causes rather than meanings, and fear of the actual rather than awareness of the possible. As a consequence, most comments in such a vein are passed off as "pretentious" or "cliche-ridden", mountaineers etc. are considered to be "hedonistic thrill-seekers", and the value of existential and phenomenological studies are unjustly dismissed.

18 Rebuffat, G., 'Freedom to Climb', *Climber and Rambler*. 1980, July, p.45.

19 Sartre, J. P., *Being and Nothingess* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956) trans. H. Barnes, p.537.

20 Cited in: Gilbert, R., 'He's Not A Bird, He's Not A Plane.' *Sports Illustrated*. 1968, Feb. 5th., pp.60-70.

21 A development of Soren Kierkegaard's *Angst:* the concept of 'Dread'.

22 Nunn, P., 'Climbers.' *Climber and Rambler.* 1980, April, p.32.

23 Cited in: Randall, G., 'The Final Game', *Mountain,* 1981, 80, p.29.

24 Loc. cit.

25 Fawcett, R., 'The Hangman's Noose', *Mountain,* 1981, 80, p.31.

26 See the article by Harold Drasdo, 'The Nature and Reason of Risk Taking.' *Climber and Rambler.* 1981, April, pp.52–56.

27 The 'accusation' is made by Peter Donnelly, in his article on the fallacy that climbing is not really dangerous: 'Four Fallacies.' *Mountain.* 1981, 80, pp.38–40.

28 See Samuel Klausner's studies, in particular his chapter on 'Sport Parachuting' contained in: Slovenko, R. and Knight, J. A. (eds.), *Motivations in Play, Games, and Sport.* (Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1967) pp.671–694.

29 In particular the work of Zuckerman and Spielberger.

30 In other words I wish to avoid entering into any argument that suggests if it is conceivable, then it is possible, so any sport where it is conceivable that a fatal accident could occur one gains awareness of being able–to–die. I make the distinction between activities where the danger is foreseeable as inherent in the nature of the sport and those where it is not because I am not concerned with the actuality of danger. I am claiming that 'danger' sports force one to be aware of death even before one enters into them, or has an accident. In potentially lethal sports, like archery or football, this thought does not necessarily enter into our minds.

31 Nietzsche, F., 'The Gay Science', in: *The Portable Nietzsche,* (New York: Viking Press, 1966) trans. W. Kaufmann (p.97).

32 'The Anti–Christ', op.cit. p.619.

33 'Thus Spoke Zarathustra', op.cit. p.184.

34 'The Twilight of the Idols', op.cit., p.463.

35 Younghusband, Sir F., *The Epic of Mount Everest* (London: Edward Arnold, 1926) p.292.

36 'Adam and Eve' are two monolithic boulders marking the summit of Tryfan. It is tradition to 'claim' the peak by climbing onto Adam (both blocks are about 8ft high and 2ft square on the top) and leaping onto Eve. The 'leap' is more than a step, but nevertheless easy. However, these two monoliths are perched on the edge of the 600ft East Face.

37 'Being and Nothingness', op.cit., p.545.

38 Alvarez, A., 'I Like To Risk My Life.' Contained in: E. W. Gerber, and W. J. Morgan (eds.), *Sport and the Body: A Philosophical Symposium* (Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger, 1972) 1st. Edition, p.205.

39 Nietzsche, F., *The Will to Power* (New York: Viking Press, 1967) trans. W. Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (#656).

40 Herzog, M., *Annapurna* (New York: Popular Library, 1953) p.183.

41 'Thus Spoke Zarathustra', op.cit. (Of Self Overcoming).

42 'The Final Game', loc.cit.

43 Ibid.

44 Czikszentmihaly, M., 'The Americanisation of Rock Climbing', *University of Chicago Magazine*, 1964, Vol.61: No.6.

45 Translated by Walter Kaufmann and cited in his 'Existentialism and Death.' a series of contributions, edited by H. Fiefel, on *The Meaning of Death* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959) p.59.

**What is a Person?:**

1 The problems arising from a mind-body are irretractable and we will not deal with them in any great depth. It is enough to say that any theory which denies that a body (or some form of material processes) alone constitutes a person, because bodies cannot think and feel etc., and thus gives ontological status to some other entity (a 'soul' or 'mind'), faces the same doubts: how do 'souls' think and feel etc.

2 Even so, this does not guarantee that both lives belong to the same person.

3 See Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland*, Chapter 5: 'Advice From A Caterpillar'.

4 A lot of these games, such as *Diplomacy*, are designed in a way that they can be played by correspondence.

5 These examples are contemporary versions of the story of Theseus' ship, told by Plato in the *Phaedo*, 58A.

6 'Alice's Adventures In Wonderland', Chapter 2: The Pool of Tears.

7 Danto, A. C., 'Persons', in Edwards, P., *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: MacMillan, 1967) Vol.6, p.110.

8 Strawson, P., *Individuals* (London: Methuen, 1959) pp.87-116.

9 It is amazing how often we make the same false assumption with the physically disabled. Because of the (sometimes extreme) differences in appearance we believe that the analogy does not hold: these 'persons' are different.

10 We will take up this aspect of fair play in chapter 8: 'Absolutes and Consequences'.

**The Possibility of Ethical Knowledge:**

1 Camus, A., *Resistance, Rebellion and Death* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1961) p.242.

2 We will not go further into this point here, but it will be discussed in detail in the following chapters (particularly, 'Reason, Habit and Moral Education').

3 By this I simply mean that we can identify the way people do actually behave in society, or how people's attitudes are expressed by their behaviour.

4 The subject matter of climbing ethics might be obscure and I must admit my bias towards discussing mountaineering. But, this analysis could be paralleled by a discussion of drug use in sport. The arguments presented here are directly transferable if drugs can be considered as artificial aids. The questions in either case are the same: (1) Is it unfair to use an aid to performance if others do not, and (2) Should improved performance be sought at the expense of using these aids. The topic of drug use has been dealt with in an interesting, although slightly different manner, by Brown, W. M., 'Ethics, Drugs, and Sport', *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, 1980, VII, 15–23.

5 Obituary of Reinhard Karl by Liz Klobusicky, from the preface to Karl's 'By A Hair', *Mountain* 1982 (Sept./Oct.), 87, p.25.

6 We will avoid the question of the unreasonable skeptic for the time being. In brief, even if good reasons can be given for why we should act in a certain way the skeptic can always retort, "Why should we follow reason?" Any attempt to answer this will always supply a reason and will thus be recursive. That is, I must always supply another reason for why we should follow the first one. This, of course, can never answer the question (or rather, raises another and another: "Why should we follow the reason that you've given me as to why we should follow reason?" and so on). Arguably, the question is also absurd. Only a reasonable person (that is, one who accepts reason) would ask a question such as this and, consequently, has accepted the value of reason by asking it. If the enquirer is unreasonable, then, no amount of good reasons will sway them because they are not swayed by reasons. These problems have been dealt with by Kurt Baier in chapter 7 of his *The Moral Point of View: A Rational Basis of Ethics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1958) pp.298–320; and Kai Nielsen in 'Is "Why Should I Be Moral?" an Absurdity?', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 1958, XXXVI, 25–32; and 'Why Should I Be Moral?', *Methodos*, 1963, XV.

7 Nozick, R., *Philosophical Explanations*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981) p.559.

8 Although we look at noncognitivist theories shortly, I do not wish to dwell on the empiricist criterion of meaning. We will accept that the arguments against the principle of verification have been conclusive. I mention this possible line of defense by the skeptic merely to show that I have not overlooked it.

9 Hume, D., *A Treatise On Human Nature*, Book III, Part I, Sec. I (L. A. Selby–Bigge edition).

10 Such definitions must also face what is known as the *euthyphro* question, after its statement in Plato's dialogue (see: *Euthyphro*, 10a; cf. Nozick, op.cit. pp.552,743*ff*121): Is something good because God approves of it, or does God approve of it because it is good? An interesting parallel question is posed by Sartre, in his essay *Existentialism and Humanism* (London: Methuen, 1948) p.31, where Abraham dreams that an angel from heaven has told him to sacrifice his son. The only way for Abraham to judge whether the dream was a vision from heaven is to judge whether it would be right to sacrifice his son. If he believes it would, then the angel was real. Thus, if we deny that God is talking to us because we do not believe God would ask us to perform something that was not 'good', then we must always judge our actions according to their inherent value to decide whether God would make such a request. For Sartre, the existence of God becomes a redundant question in our moral dilemnas.

11 See: Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*, and Bentham's *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislations*.

12 See: Perry, R. B., *Realms of Value: A Critique of Human Civilization* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954); and, Sharp, F. C., *Ethics* (New York: The Century Co., 1928).

13 Ibid., p.101.

14 Loc. cit.

15 We will discuss utilitarianism when we look at normative theories in the next chapter ('Absolutes and Consequences').

16 Ibid., pp.3,107,109.: Cf. R. B. Brandt, *Value and Obligation* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1961) pp.264,274–5.

17 The term was coined by G. E. Moore in his *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1903). This discussion of the naturalistic fallacy, coming after outlining definist theories might suggest that Moore was responding to Sharp and Perry. Clearly, this is not the case: Perry was 50 years Moore's successor. This very brief account of naturalism has not mentioned Perry's dismissal of Moore's argument, although we will discuss it shortly. Nevertheless, Moore's "open–question argument" has been used quite effectively in countering the naturalist's theories.

18 'Realms of Value', p.2*ff*.

19 This does highlight one important point that we will raise later: the failure to find an objectively true metaethical theory does not lead to normative skepticism. It may be that there is no recourse but to stipulate what the nature of value could be. We might not be able to prove true or false the statement, "Killing is wrong" but could still adhere to the normative principle "Thou shalt not kill". The relationship between metaethics and normative ethics is a matter we will discuss before we move from the former to the latter.

20 'Principia Ethica', p.6.

21 See: *Language, Truth and Logic* (especially Chapter 6).

22 See: *Ethics and Language*

23 Hare, R. M., *The Language of Morals* (Oxford, Eng.: Oxford University Press, 1952).

24 McIntosh, P. C., *Fair Play: Ethics In Sport and Education* (london: Heinemann, 1979) p.113.

25 'The Language of Morals', pp.118–119.

26 Ibid., p.103–106.

27 Ibid., p.104.

28 Esposito, J., 'Play and Possibility', *Philosophy Today*, 1974, XVIII, p.142.

29 Suits, B., *The Grasshopper: Games, Life and Utopia* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1978) chapter 3 in particular.

30 Foot, P., 'Moral Beliefs', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1958–59, 59, p.83*ff*.

31 Warnock, G. J., *Contemporary Moral Philosophy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967) p.67.

32 Refer back to chapter 3 ('The Problem of Universals') to see how I am using this term.

33 However, this is too simple. Although we might not be able to determine an 'essence' of mountain climbing, we can certainly establish an objective *definition*. We will discuss this in a moment.

34 'The Language of Morals', p.69.

**Absolutes and Consequences:**

1 The prescriptive theory of evaluative language offers a great deal to discussions of aesthetics. Are gymnastics movements, golf swings, quarterback passes, and tennis shots etc. "beautiful" by virtue of fulfilling certain purposive criteria? This seems to suggest a more contextualist approach as being viable for an aesthetics of sport. We certainly seem to use evaluative language in this way in many varied situations. Particularly, craftspersons talk of "beautiful" tools that are ideal for the job, and chefs treasure good knives and pans, etc. This is in contrast to the more isolationist position whereby an object is beautiful in itself. Paul Ziff has argued against any aesthetic aspect in sport arising from biomechanical efficiency or purposive action in his 'A Fine Forehand', *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, 1974, 1, 92–109.

2 This was in fact the case for Willi Unsoeld and Tom Hornbein on the first ascent of the West Ridge of Everest. As a result, they also completed the first traverse of the mountain.

3 Bentham, J., *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1876) Chap.1(2).

4 In the previous chapter we discussed the 'naturalistic fallacy'. The assertion that it is a fact that pleasure is desired and hence is desirable appears to commit this fallacy. We cannot claim this to be a logical proof, but must accept the leap from *is* to *ought* as an unjustifiable given. Bentham's and Mill's only 'proof' for the principle of utility (other than an intuitive claim) is an appeal to our hedonistic nature.

5 We will not discuss the difficulties that arise when we try to measure utility (e.g., is a great increase in happiness for a small number of people equivalent to, better than, or worse than a small increase in happiness for a great number of people), but I am well aware of them. To a certain extent these considerations do not have as telling an effect on our discussion of rules in sport.

6 Cf., Hume, D., *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751), Section III of 'Justice'.

7 This is one instance where the problem of comparing short-term and long-term utility would arise.

8 McIntosh, P. C., *Fair Play: Ethics in Sport and Education* (london: Heinemann, 1979) p.87.

9 This argument can be used to show how it is in our own best interest (over the long-term) that *we* should be moral, but it does not give any good reasons why *I* should be moral, especially if I know that there are enough people being moral to maintain order without me.

10 For those not familiar with the game, l.b.w. stands for 'leg before wicket'. If the ball would otherwise have hit the stumps, but is prevented from doing so by striking the batsman's pads, the batsman is declared 'out'.

11 Smart, J. J. C., 'An Outline of a System of Utilitarian Ethics', in Smart, J. J. C. and Williams, B., *Utilitarianism: For and Against* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1973) p.11. Smart synopsizes and extends the arguments of David Lyons from his, *The Forms and Limits of Utilitarianism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965).

12 These problems are particuarly important in discussions on euthenasia and legally sanctioned killing.

13 'Fair Play', op.cit., p.101. Taking this statement out of its context might be misrepresentative. McIntosh sets up a *straw man* to knock down, and does not take this position himself.

14 Donagan, A., 'Is There a Credible Form Of Utilitarianism?', in Bayles, Michael D., (ed.) *Contemporary Utilitarianism* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1968).

15 A *categorical imperative* is a necessary and absolute moral law, believed to be the ultimate rational foundation for all moral conduct.

16 Kant, I., *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1959) p.47.

17 The principle of respect for persons is based on the notion of moral agency. This is important if we are to argue that morality requires that the agent act *for* moral reasons and not merely *in accordance with* the demands of duty. The problems this raises for moral education are discussed in the next chapter.

18 The invasion of privacy by the utilitarian desire for the 'greater good' is illustrated in the recent film, *Absence of Malice*. An innocent citizen is publicly investigated in connection with a murder. The authorities believe that he will attempt to clear his name by using his contacts with organized crime to find out who was actually involved.

19 Despite the intitial appearance of objectivity given by the absolutist position, the right of choice and self-determination implies a subjective approach. This does not entail that deontological ethics are any less universal, but, that each individual takes a personal viewpoint. The utilitarian position accepts an objectively describable end according to which all actions must be judged.

20 Nagel, T., *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1979) pp.203-204.

21 This is one reason why fair play should be elaborated when teaching games to children so that they understand this acceptance.

22 Rawls, J., 'Justice As Fairness', *Journal of Philosophy*, 1957, LIV, p.657.

23 It can be argued that desire for the end of justice or fair play is in itself a consequentialist aim. I see nothing wrong with this argument, but do not see that it negates a deontological theory of fairness. It may be that our desire for fair play is prudential, however, once we have accepted the justice system then our obligations become quite independent of this aim. We become obligated to our duties to maintain our original contract. Thus, I do not see that absolutes and consequences are mutually exclusive.

24 'Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals', op.cit., p.39.

25 'Justice As Fairness', p.658.

26 Ibid.

**Reason, Habit and Moral Education:**

1 It is worth mentioning John Rawls', highly acclaimed and much discussed, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971) which is in part, based on exactly this correspondence. Rawls' initial outline for his thesis was presented in his 1958 paper: 'Justice as Fairness'.

2 Notice how the relationship between sport and society is one-way in all our examples. That is, sport is subordinate to, or less valuable than, 'everyday life' (whatever this might be). Consequently, sport and physical education can be justified to some extent by playing a part in the more 'serious' aspects of life, which are (presumably) inherently justifiable. In this view, the 'sportsworld' is always the training ground for the 'real world', and not visa versa.

3 Arnold, P. J., *Education, Physical Education and Personality Development* (New York: Athena Press, 1968) p.104.

4 See: Mitchell, E. D. and Mason, B. S., *The Theory of Play* (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1948) pp.288-89. (Cf. Arnold, op. cit., pp.107-8).

5 Op. cit., p.107.

6 Redmond, G., 'The First Tom Brown's Schooldays: Origins and Evolution of "Muscular Christianity" in Children's Literature, 1762-1857, *Quest*, Summer 1978, XXX, p.7. Redmond also points out that, "to play fairly and avoid cheating were sentiments which were reiterated time and again in the *sports* books produced for children in the first-half of the nineteenth century". (p.14)

7 See: McIntosh, P. C., *Sport in Society* (London: C. A. Watts & Co., 1968) p.77.

8 See: McIntosh, P. C., *Fair Play: Ethics in Sport and Education* (London: Heinemann, 1979) p.33.

9 I wish to avoid using a terminology that confuses an act-orientation and rule-orientation with act and rule utilitarianism. I use the phrase 'act-specific' to refer to a concern for the moral quality of acts quite apart from any utilitarian considerations.

10 In general, the scientists climbed to test equipment, learn about glaciation etc., and the military used the peaks for reconnaissance and occasionally navigation.

11 Newby, E., *Great Ascents: A Narrative History of Mountaineering* (London: David & Charles, 1977) p.41.

12 Professor John Tyndall was a contemporary of Faraday and succeeded him at the Royal Institute. He was one of the last of the scientist mountaineers who was first attracted to the mountains to collect evidence for a theory of glaciatioin, but became fascinated by the sport.

13 Cf. Newby, op. cit., p.41.

14 Hankinson, A., *The Mountain Men: An Early History of Rock Climbing in North Wales* (London: Heinemann, 1977) p.1.

15 William Wordsworth, *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey* (Cf. Hankinson, op. cit., p.2.)

16 Donnelly, P., 'The Last of Four Fallacies: Climbing Leads People to Form Close Friendships', *Mountain*, 1982 (Jan/Feb), 83, p.45.

17 Houston, C. S., 'The Last Blue Mountain', in S. Z. Klausner (ed.) *Why Man Takes Chances: Studies In Stress Seaking* (New York: Anchor, 1968) p.51. (Cf. Donnelly, op. cit., p.45.)

18 Munrow, A. D., *Physical Education: A Discussion of Principles* (London: G. E. Bell & Sons, 1972) p.143.

19 Cf. Donnelly, P., 'The Third of Four Fallacies: Climbing is Character Building', *Mountain*, 1981 (Nov/Dec), 82, p.20.

20 Tutko, T. and Bruns, W., 'Sports Don't Build Character - They Build Characters', in D. Stanley Eitzen, *Sport in Contemporary Society: An Anthology* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979) pp.234–5.

21 See, for example: Donnelly, P. C., 'The Four Fallacies', *Mountain*, 1981–82, Editions 80–83.

22 Durkheim, E., *Moral Education* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1961) p.148.

23 See: Berger, P. L. and Luckmann, T., *The Social Construction of Reality* (New York: Anchor Doubleday, 1966) pp.94–5.

24 The minor premise 'affirms the consequent' which does not entail that the subject of this premise belongs to the class of things described in the antecedent of the major premise. This might be clearer in the following example: All rabbits eat carrots. I eat carrots. Therefore, I am a rabbit. Obviously, it is not only rabbits that eat carrots, so associating myself with carrot-eaters does not mean that I am a rabbit.

25 This will basically be an act-utilitarianism as described in the previous chapter.

26 Kohlberg, L., 'Stages of Moral Development as a Basis for Moral Education', in C. M. Beck, B. S. Crittenden, and E. V. Sullivan (eds.) *Moral Education: Interdisciplinary Approaches* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971) p.86.

27 Ibid., p.87.

28 Neumann, H., *Education for Moral Growth* (New York: Appleton and Co., 1923) p.191.

29 Baier, K., 'Ethical Pluralism and Moral Education', in C. M. Beck *et al.*, op. cit., p.95.

30 See: Peters, R. S., 'Reason and Habit: The Paradox of Moral Education', in W. R. Niblett (ed.) *Moral Education in a Changing Society* (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1963) pp.46–65.

31 Kazepides, T., 'The Alleged Paradox of Moral Education', in D. B. Cochrane, C. H. Hamm, and A. C. Kazepides, *The Domain of Moral Education* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979) p.155.

32 'Reason and Habit: The Paradox of Moral Education', p.47.

33 Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, II, iv, 1.

34 Ibid., II, iv, 4–5.

35 Keating, J. W., 'Sportsmanship as a Moral Category', *Ethics*, 1964 (Oct), LXXV, p.34. Reprinted in, Gerber, E. W. and Morgan, W. J., *Sport and the Body*, pp.264–71.

36 This is primarily due to the nature of the games and sports used in school on the physical education curriculum.

37 'Reason and Habit: The Paradox of Moral Education', p.62.

38 'Stages of Moral Development as a Basis for Moral Education', p.88.

39 Douglas, W. O., in G. A. Smith and C. D. Smith (eds.), *The Armchair Mountaineer* (New York: Pitman, 1968) p.231.

40 Meier, K., 'The Kinship of the Rope and the Loving Struggle: A Philosophic Analysis of Communication in Mountain Climbing', *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, 1976, 3, pp.57&58.

41 'Reason and Habit: The Paradox of Moral Education', p.55.

42 Hirst, P., *Moral Education in a Secular Society* (London: University of London Press, 1974) p.67.

**The Future:**

1 (I will clarify, shortly, what I mean by ideal worlds).

2 Ruyer, R., *L'utopie et les utopies* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1950) p.9. Cited and translated by Hansot, E. *Perfection and Progress: Two Modes of Utopian Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1974) p.19.

3 Maddox, J., *The Doomsday Syndrome* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1972).

4 Fogg, W. L., 'Technology and Dystopia', in Richter, P. E., *Utopia/Dystopia?* (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman, 1975) p.71.

5 We looked at the problem this presents for moral educators in the last chapter, but did not examine the ideological structure behind the socialization processes.

6 The distinction of three levels of legitimation is outlined in Berger, P. L. and Luckmann, T., *The Social Construction of Reality* (New York: Anchor Doubleday, 1966) pp.94–95.

7 Ingham, A. G. and Loy, J. W., 'The Social System of Sport: A Humanistic Perspective', *Quest*, 1973, p.4.

8 Negley, G., 'Utopias and Dystopias: A Look Backward', in Richter, P. E., *Utopia/Dystopia?* Op. cit., p.21.

9 We discussed this in some depth in chapter 2.

10 We will look at Bacon's *New Atlantis* and his views of historical development a little later.

11 Soccer played on artificial 'turf' is faster, less physical (the players do not 'slide tackle'), and played on the ground. On grass, the ball is often kept more in the air (especially if the pitch is wet), and the game is generally slower.

12 Sklar, J., 'The Political Theory of Utopia: From Melancholy to Nostalgia', in Manuel, F. E., (ed.) *Utopias and Utopian Thought* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1966) p.105.

13 Suits, B., *The Grasshopper: Games, Life and Utopia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978) p.8.

14 Ibid. p.7 & p.9.

15 "Games . . . are contrived situations, the purpose of which is to heighten and bring into focus the interplay between possibility and actuality"; cf. Esposito, J. L., 'Play and Possibility', *Philosophy Today*, 1974, XVIII, p.141.

16 Refer back to chapter 2, "what is the essence of 'soc-A' (playing soccer) such that winning 'soc-B' (a game of soccer) measures how well one does 'soc-A'?"

17 Delattre, P., 'Celestial Sports', in *Tales Of A Dalai Lama* (Berkeley, Calif.: Creative Arts Bks., 1978) pp.40-41.

18 More, St. Thomas, *The Complete Works Of St. Thomas More*, Vol.IV: *Utopia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965) p.25.

19 Ibid., p.139.

20 Hansot, E., *Perfection and Progress: Two Modes of Utopian Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1974) p.13.

21 Becker, C., *The Heavenly City Of The Eighteenth Century Philosophers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932) p.19.

22 Bodin, J., *The Six Books Of The Commonwealth*, abridged and translated by M. J. Tooley (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, n.d.) p.2.

23 'Celestial Sports', op.cit., p.42.

24 The literature in the philosophy of physical education and sport is full of phenomenological and existential studies on sport and self-awareness. Sport is also attributed with virtue enhancing qualities, as we discussed in chapter 9.

25 See, Popper, K., *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974).

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